

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT'S FILES

FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER

SUBJECT: Meeting with Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of
Singapore, Tuesday, April 10, 1973, at 11:13 a.m.
- 12:18 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew
Ambassador Monteiro

Prime Minister Lee: I would like to congratulate you on your achievement. No one thought it was possible.

President Nixon: The toughest decision was the bombing in December. What did you think at the time?

Prime Minister Lee: I thought it would lead to peace at the end of January. The problem now is to maintain the peace.

President Nixon: Re-entering Southeast Asia will be very tough. There is enormous pressure on us.

Prime Minister Lee: The mass media have a silent conspiracy to keep up the mood of withdrawal. U. S. technology has made it a small world, and it is ironic that now you have the death wish of losing your influence in that smaller world.

President Nixon: This applies not only to Southeast Asia. The same people want us out of Europe too. It is the death wish of the ruling groups in the West.

Prime Minister Lee: The leaders are not so bad. What is bad is the leaders of public opinion. They don't understand the implications of their thinking. If the United States removes her last soldier from Europe, what is left?

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President Nixon: What should we do in Southeast Asia?

Prime Minister Lee: You must create the impression that your policy will prevail despite the cacophony of voices. You have withdrawn in an honorable way giving South Vietnam a chance -- a better than even chance. South Vietnam has a chance if they don't rely on a purely military solution. The right strategy is to try to win the Communists away from the North. Give them a share of power in the municipal level. There must now be a debate in Hanoi between rehabilitation and infiltration.

President Nixon: Do we require a stick as well as a carrot?

Prime Minister Lee: Yes. It is hard to know how they assess the U. S. domestic situation. If I were they, I would play it safe. But then I am not them. Hence, there is the need for a stick and not only a carrot.

President Nixon: I don't want to leave any doubts. With respect to the intellectual class in this country, we face a disturbing softness and weakness. There is a desire to withdraw everywhere. Heath, Home and Carrington are strong men, so is Pompidou. The present time requires a strong, vigorous leadership to maintain a credible defense.

Prime Minister Lee: You are the anchor man of the non-Communist world.

President Nixon: The Japanese and the Germans could do it but they won't be allowed to. If we cave, everything will come apart. If we had come back dishonored, we would have lost the trust of our friends and the respect of our adversaries. We can't turn away from the things that need doing. We must leaven PRC and Soviet policies toward their neighbors. But in order for that game to work we must engage in strong policies. Dr. Kissinger and I strongly believe this. There are no other two people who believe this more strongly.

Prime Minister Lee: If South Vietnam sticks, this whole policy will bring on a change of mood. Americans cannot go on being self-pitying. A weak America is dangerous for the whole world.

President Nixon: What do you think of the Japanese? A people with their history won't be content to make transistor radios.

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Prime Minister Lee: Look at the difference between the Japanese and the Germans. The Japanese claim a great power role, the Germans don't. I don't want the Japanese to conduct an independent policy. It must be interwoven with the rest of the world. If they get an independent policy, they will be a joker in the cards.

President Nixon:[Jokingly] You are getting to be an economic problem for us.

Prime Minister Lee: We went into textiles only to sop up unemployment.

President Nixon: What do you think of Indonesia?

Prime Minister Lee: It would be better if they spread the benefits beyond Jakarta. The Generals in power are acquiring wealth. In Islam wealth comes with power.

President Nixon: Are we pursuing a correct policy towards China?

Prime Minister Lee: If Chou and Mao live long enough, the line could be set for a decade. Their main preoccupation is with the Russians. The Chinamen know that Americans have a conscience; the Russians do not. Thus they are very careful not to antagonize them.

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