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MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. William Jordan, National Security Council

SUBJECT : Television Interview with Prime Minister  
Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore.

The following is the verbatim text of a filmed television interview granted by Prime Minister Lee to a traveling Mexican television commentator which may be of interest to you:

QUESTION: "Mr. Prime Minister, how do you account for this feeling of civic enterprise which I find so prevalent here in Singapore?"

PRIME MINISTER LEE: "Well we started off with a fairly good inheritance. The British left us a reasonably efficient and honest administration, and building on that, we gave the community a sense of progress, and identification between them and the achievements which their efforts and our planning were able to bring about. Crucial in all these young countries, the new countries, is the ability not to look back at the past. Once you are in office and the people are where they are and you allow yourself the pleasures of your office and the life that goes with power, then you are unable to command their moral respect and when you exhort them, when you discipline them, people will not accept it and you are in trouble, but if you are able to act as a group and ask them to do this, and I myself am prepared to do it because it is necessary, and they accept the fact that you are doing it yourself, then they are more likely to join you in making a similar effort."

QUESTION: "I see, in other words it is a sense of doing things jointly. Mr. Prime Minister, do you think that these countries of Southeast Asia will form a sort of regional alliance or some kind of cooperative effort?"

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PRIME MINISTER LEE: "I suggest, that the only hope really is just that for Southeast Asia. This is a very special situation and we must consider not only national boundaries, but also ideologically and politically in making alliances. Here the room for maneuvers and manipulation by the bigger powers is enormously large and, hard as it may be at the beginning, we've got to make the effort to achieve a bigger and wider sense of this community of relatively small nations of Southeast Asia."

QUESTION: "What about Vietnam?...what do you think of that situation?"

PRIME MINISTER LEE: "Well this is one of the acute problems of the world and if you want to talk about legality, international legality, then of course, the United States will be in a very difficult position because it hasn't declared war on North Vietnam and yet it has to bomb North Vietnam...so if you insist on legality, and the world believes that legality is all that counts, then I think right will not necessarily prevail. This is one of the facts of life, if you leave the local proponents alone, then one side has overwhelming terror and power and those that stand for anything different won't have a chance. So the U.S. intervention has given (a chance to) those who do not want South Vietnam to go communist, also this process of communist infiltration should not be repeated in an ever widening area in Southeast Asia. We would like to see a solution which guarantees the ultimate will of the people of South Vietnam to decide their own future, whether to be part of one Vietnam with the North whether it is communist or part communist and part non communist, but before you can restore that you must knock out the ability of the other side to terrorize and pressurize."

QUESTION: "What do you think will happen if American troops evacuate South Vietnam?"

PRIME MINISTER LEE: "Well if the American troops were to get out tomorrow there would be no South Vietnamese Government. What must be done is eliminate coercion and subversion. South Vietnam must be able to emerge and assess itself and exercise its own free will."

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QUESTION: "Thank you Mr. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew for your very interesting views on the situation here in Southeast Asia." \*

FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR PLANS:

~~76/ William E. Colby~~

William E. Colby

\* This interview was shown on Station XEW, Mexico City, on May 9, 1967.