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**PRAGMATISM AND PRACTICE:
PRESENTING *THE BIG IDEAS OF*
*LEE KUAN YEOW***

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PROCEEDINGS

STROBE TALBOTT: Good morning, everybody. As I look around this room I can see that this is not just a very good turnout, but it is also a very global turnout. We have a number of the embassies in town represented here, and we have among the guests a number of people who have contributed substantially to the enhancement of U.S. foreign policy in many parts of the world, notably including Asia. I'm looking at Ambassador Harry Thayer and his wife Marian. Harry was an ambassador to Singapore and played a very important part in opening the U.S. relationship with the People's Republic of China.

I want to now get to the business at hand because we have a very good program for you. The name, Lee Kuan Yew, is all by itself, I would say, a global brand. It has for decades been associated with big ideas. Since big ideas are at the core of the Brookings mission and agenda, all of us here, and I'm speaking particularly for Martin Indyk, the vice president and director of our foreign policy program here at Brookings; Richard Bush, who is the director of our East Asia policy center; and Jeff Bader, who holds the John Whitehead senior fellowship in foreign policy, and who has played his own very important role in American foreign policy, particularly with regard to Asia.

We're all proud that the Lee Kuan Yew name is now associated with the Brookings brand. Two years ago we established the Lee Kuan Yew chair in Southeast Asia studies. The inaugural holder of that chair, Joseph Liow, has played a very important role in facilitating this event. Last fall, a book titled, appropriately, *The Big Ideas of Lee Kuan Yew*, was published in Singapore.

We are honored to welcome an editor and two contributors of that book. Dr. Shashi Jayakumar is a senior fellow at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies. Ambassador Chan Heng Chee, a former ambassador to this town, and permanent representative of Singapore at the United Nations, and a very, very special friend of this institution. And Ambassador Bilahari Kausikan, a senior fellow at the School of Social Sciences at Singapore Management University, with a long and distinguished career as a diplomat.

After each delivers remarks, Joseph, the Lee Kuan Yew chair holder, will moderate a Q&A with all of you, and Martin will then close the formal program. I invite all of you to join us right behind where we're meeting now for an informal reception after the program. Those of you who tweet, can do so. It's the one exception to turn off your phone, and you can tweet under the hashtag of Lee Kuan Yew. So now, over to Shashi.

SHASHI JAYAKUMAR: Mr. Strobe Talbott, President of the Brookings Institution, Martin Indyk, Vice President of Brookings, Richard Bush, Director of East Asia Center, thank you for making this event possible. Dear friends, thank you for being here.

On 16 September 2013, the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in Singapore had a conference to mark Mr. Lee Kuan Yew's 90th birthday. A conference which bears the name of this book. Two days later there was also a major conference at the Singapore University of Technology and Design, SUTD, also on Mr. Lee Kuan Yew's ideas, more on cities and urban planning. And the director of that center, the Lee Kuan Yew Center

for Innovative Cities, Ambassador Chan Heng Chee is here today.

Let me come to the point, why this present book which captures the discussion of the 16 September 2013 discussion. For the gathering at the Lee Kuan Yew school we had something which was really rather unique. There will doubtless be further such occasions where people who know Mr. Lee come to speak of Mr. Lee. But our feeling was that it was very unlikely that those who know Mr. Lee so well will come together in his lifetime to give their thoughts on the measure of the man. Clearly, in our view, and in the view of the Lee Kuan Yew School, the proceedings and the quality of the proceedings were more than enough to warrant a book.

The book, which I hope you'll buy, has contributions on governance, society, economics, diplomacy, and public service, and also one or two very interesting contributions from a personal perspective, from those who have known Mr. Lee the longest. There are certain connecting strands which stand out in the book, and certain less obvious points which I'd like to tease out very briefly. I'm going to do so, of course, from the perspective of one of the two editors of the book. The other cannot be here today. But also as someone who has worked with Mr. Lee on and off for the best part of three years, and interviewed him for various projects.

Number one for me, would be the sense of Mr. Lee's overwhelming sheer pragmatism. He does not subscribe, and this comes out throughout the book, to any ism or any school of state building. As several contributors remarked, what Mr. Lee was interested in was not theories. It was more what actually works. Mr. Heng Swee Keat, who is our education minister in Singapore, former principle private secretary, PPS, to Mr. Lee, notes that Mr. Lee's favorite question to him was, "So what?"

Mr. Lee uses this to interrogate people or more accurately, I think, to interrogate the issue at hand. On any issue what is paramount to Mr. Lee is cutting through the clutter, the jargon, the verbiage, getting to the heart of the issues, and what the country had to do to tackle them.

On the section on governance you will find references to how Mr. Lee created -- forced to be created, I think, a cultural of excellence in public service. What he instilled, really, to me was an exacting search for the best, the very best people who had to be, in his view, at the top tier of public service. So from the get go in Singapore you have people who are ruthlessly screened and screened out, if you don't make it. The people who contributed to the book are the people who did, of course, make it. They would not, of course, claim this, but I, as editor, want to make this observation.

On this point, I want to venture that Mr. Lee's qualities came to leave a deep, binding imprint on those who worked very closely with him. Besides pragmatism, which I've touched on, he really does fuse a big picture outlook with painstaking attention to detail, and those who worked with him very closely came to have similar qualities. So particularly in the early days the sense of pragmatism within the civil service means what? It means you review plans regularly, you place an emphasis on thinking strategically, and if necessary you change course if the situation warrants this.

On the key issues it's important to note that Mr. Lee made it a point, always, of seeking out views, views which were worth listening to. Whatever your credentials are, however, he will check and later cross-check what you have given him with others. Mr. Lee, by the way, was really a master at this. He is, as Bilahari Kausikan says, an empiricist.

I should add also that Mr. Lee is on record as saying that when he was younger, when he had the strength to travel, he insisted on traveling and seeing the lay of the land, and getting a sense of place. Partly because he says getting the first-person experience for him is tremendously important. In my view, in later years when his frailty placed constraints on him he still made it a point to speak very regularly with people who know, subject matter experts. He engages them: journalists, civil servants, his foreign friends.

And indeed, when you go through his collective papers, which is published elsewhere, the amount of time he makes for people with interesting views is quite incredible. I suspect probably because he, himself, gains from the exchange. He gets a sense of what's going on in the outside world. More importantly, what nugget, what point of view could potentially be useful for the city/state I live in. Peter Ho, former head of civil service who has contributed to the book, is absolutely right when he calls Mr. Lee a one-man intelligence agency.

What the men and women featured in the book had to deal with when they were invited to share their views was interesting. Communication, believe you me, was always two ways. Several speakers allude to the fact that Mr. Lee, and you should bear this in mind, rather than steamrolling his way through, was surprisingly very open-minded. This is something which tends to be forgotten now. Indeed, the sense of Mr. Lee's sheer ability to listen and to be persuaded by good arguments is something which repeatedly comes through. But mind you, the arguments against had to be good, very, very good.

When he set his mind on what he was doing, when he was convinced that he was in the right he could be very, very unyielding. And again, as Peter Ho says, Mr. Lee once said to him, Peter Ho, reasonable men adapt. Unreasonable men change the world. Paraphrasing, of course, George Bernard Shaw.

Related to this, I think it's important to note the sort of undercurrent in the personal section of the book, the personal recollections. Those who have known him longest, of his sheer self-belief. When I say this I would couple this with the sheer force of personality. You have to understand, in the early days, in the 60s when it really did not look to many that we were going to make it, he had to have an unyielding belief in the idea of Singapore and to communicate this.

Particularly because we were an unexpected nation and people had doubts about our long-term viability. So this is something which tends, sometimes, to be forgotten. He was really at the beginning a conviction politician. He had to be in order to move people along with him, and to convince people that Singapore was a worthy enterprise.

I think the speakers that follow me will touch on Mr. Lee and Singapore's diplomacy. I do not want to dwell on this, but I want to make two minor observations before I close. One is that it has to be countered by any means extraordinary that a tiny city/state like

ours was able to enlarge its space. This is clearly due, in no small part, to Mr. Lee's vision, charism, personality, and strong friendships he formed with world leaders.

It's interesting that Richard Nixon once speculated openly that born into another time, place, or circumstance, Mr. Lee might have attained the stature of a Disraeli, Gladstone or Churchill. But I want to make the observation that I don't think Mr. Lee actually set too much store by these kinds of comments. There were, perhaps, others who called Mr. Lee a statesman, but he, himself, disclaimed this.

I want to quote Mr. Lee, what he says on this subject. And I quote, "I don't want to be considered as a statesman. First of all, I don't classify myself as a statesman. I put myself as determined, consistent, and persistent. I set out to do something. I keep on chasing until it succeeds. That's all. Anyone who thinks he's a statesman ought to see a psychiatrist."

One more small point on the diplomatic front. As you know, he went to Cambridge. That's his intellectual milieu at the beginning. He's a product of the West, and at the beginning, in some ways, an Anglophile. Harry Lee, as he was then known, and as one British foreign secretary famously said, "Harry, you're the best bloody Englishman east of the Suez."

I want to make this point, not facetiously, but to point out that this became the past, and England was a nostalgia for him eventually. It's really America that he has a fundamental belief in. In the sense that this is the country with the drive, the zeal, the openness, the creativity that has to be looked to. When in 1968 after just three years at the Premiership he takes a sabbatical of one term to renew himself, refresh his perspectives. He doesn't go back to England. He goes to Harvard, to the Kennedy School. It's there that he interacts with people like Henry Kissinger, for the first time, and Huntington and others.

What he says at the end of that sabbatical in '68 is worth quoting, and I will do so now, I quote. "My journey through America has been instructive and meaningful. I was exposed to the full range of what is the equivalent of the American establishment, people in power, people in the corridors of power, the academics who have temporarily left the corridors of power, and most important of all, the rising young generation of American youth in the universities. It's their emotive attitudes now being set towards Asia and Asians that will make America's relationship with Asia." I don't think that he has ever wavered in these beliefs.

I want to conclude by saying that this conference and the book is only a beginning. It's the start, perhaps, of a serious study of Mr. Lee and his life's work. It will certainly pave the way for other assessments of his legacy. But for those today here who are not Singaporeans, and there are many of you, I just want to explain why it's so important for another reason.

This year my nation state celebrates its 50th anniversary. There's a risk, and there's already some signs of this, that the young, who are our future in Singapore, do not understand who we are, how we were made, having gone from poverty to a relative affluence in one generation, and how vulnerable we are. So this book, in many ways, is also about the future of Singapore.

As Ambassador Chan Heng Chee says in the book, Singapore's future will be secure as long as the young generation understand why he did what he did. With that, I hope I've gone at least some way towards answering the question I posed at the beginning, why this book. Thank you for listening.

CHAN HENG CHEE: Good morning. Strobe Talbott, Richard Bush, for organizing this conference, Martin Indyk, Jeff Bader, friends, and our guests at this discussion this morning. I thought I would begin by showing you a few slides. My job is to talk about Lee Kuan Yew and governance.

Since we are talking in the year of the 50th anniversary of Singapore's independence I expect not many of you know how we started and what we have become. So if you just look at the data it shows you how far we have gone. The GDP, per capita GDP, population. Now, look at the university cohort, 1965 3 percent of the school-going children in the first year reached university, 27 percent now, and in the polytechnic 44 percent.

In terms of the structure of the workforce we began with a really largely low-skill workforce. Today 32 percent of our workforce is PME which means they are professional, managers, and executives. Now 80 percent of the population live in public housing. Here are some slides to show you Singapore as we were. Singapore as we were and Singapore today. We were like that in 1965, okay, 70s, 80s, present.

It's important because, as Shashi says, not many of our Singaporeans know where we started from, and it is not surprising. Not many Singaporeans are interested in history. We don't dwell on history. We have no historical perspective except for a few who are academics.

Now, we are here to discuss the ideas of Mr. Lee Kuan Yew. The biggest idea of Mr. Lee Kuan Yew is Singapore itself. Now, independent Singapore was not his idea. In fact, he worked against it. He wanted a merger with Malaysia. But after we were separated from Malaysia he had to make independent Singapore work. The Singapore you have today is his idea which he worked with, worked on with Dr. Goh Keng Swee, Mr. Rajaratnam, Dr. Toh Chin Chye, Mr. Hon Sui Sen, Mr. Lim Kim San, Eddie Barker, and Othman Wok. All these people worked in the team with him. It is important to remember them because we often talk of Mr. Lee and Mr. Lee alone, but he will say he worked with a team.

What makes Singapore tick, and why are we the way we are? How did the leaders of Singapore shape the state and its institutions and the culture of the country in the space of 50 years? Now, much has been said about Singapore, much caricature. Disneyland with a death penalty, paradise designed by McKinsey. These are comments by journalists who make fleeting visits to Singapore.

I think it is also a refusal to accept the results of success at face value, and because the way we do things are so different. But things were, and still are, very different between a city-state, and a medium sized country, and a continental size country. This is one aspect which I find not many observers and analysts actually realize.

Consider these facts. The size of Singapore is three and a half times the size of Washington D.C., no natural resources, not even water. At the time of independence we were 2.4 million people, multiethnic, and we existed in Southeast Asia in a region with China to the north, and in a region that was tense and hostile. We were expelled from Malaysia amid hostility, and Sukarno in Indonesia was actively mounting a policy of Konfrontasi against Singapore and Malaysia.

And independent Singapore faced many challenges, and many said we wouldn't survive. Lee Kuan Yew and his team began to think actively of how to make this city-state a nation state, an improbable country into a country. And, in fact, he said, Mr. Lee said, you know, if you want to bake a cake there's a recipe. You want to build a house there are books and manuals. But if you want to build a nation there are no books to tell you what to do.

Now, if I had to distill his thinking about governance over the years I would list four important elements or principles. Were they held rigidly over the years after Singapore's independence? I would say the basics remained, the fundamentals were there, but they were outdated with the times. The four principles of governance, let me just enumerate them.

Firstly, for Singapore to survive it has to be extraordinary. We have to be a first-world country in a third-world region. What does he mean by that? It means you must not just have first-world infrastructure, the hardware, the buildings, the expressways, the green parks. More importantly, we must have first-world software, and Singapore must demonstrate that it has efficiency, rule of law, non-corruption, competence, and produce a sense of security and safety. So that's the first principle of governance, to achieve that.

Secondly, what matters for Mr. Lee is that for a country to succeed it is institutions and men, today we say people. It is important to build institutions, he said, and he added, you can have the right institutions, but not the right men and the constitutions won't work, and would be ripped up and new constitutions would be needed. You need good men with ability, integrity, and commitment, and that special quality which would make them keep their cool under fire.

Now, to Mr. Lee, leadership is extremely important in governance. He focused his mind and thought a lot about leadership. The difference, he said, between Singapore and other countries like the United States and Britain is that, he said, they, these countries, will continue on well despite having an average government, but we will not because we are special, and we need special leadership to succeed.

Now, not many of you know that, in fact, Mr. Lee was absolutely fascinated by Apollo 13, that episode of the three astronauts who almost -- who began a desperate journey back home. If they made one false move -- you remember Apollo 13, Tom Hanks? They would have shot into outer space, never to return to Singapore. He was apparently fascinated by that, and he wanted to know how did NASA know how to choose these men who are so cool and calm in a crisis. And he asked Americans.

In fact, Dr. Goh Keng Swee, picking up on this, asked an Israeli general: How

do you know which general will actually work well in the field and stand up to the test? And the Israeli general said, you don't. You just put them in the field and see if they survive. You know, but he was very interested in how leaders are selected, and to find the men and women he was looking for he emphasized character as a fundamental quality. He was in search of the person who when in a crisis, would be cool and calm and can handle things.

He wanted good men and women for politics, and as such he said, he scoured the whole of Singapore, and he was very open about it. He didn't keep it quiet. He talks about this all the time in the papers. I'm looking for people and we are scouring. We have all these lists that we make up. He meets them and they are invited to tea parties, and to see if they meet the test, and if they would want to take up the challenge.

So this is the way Singapore chooses leaders. This was, of course, severely criticized 20 years into Singapore's independence when we had a degree of affluence. The people in Singapore criticized the PAP for focusing too much on educational qualifications, and detractors portrayed PAP leadership as an elitist leadership. But to be quite honest, many of the civil servants and politicians came from working-class backgrounds and humble backgrounds. If they were elitist it was because they were well educated, and they scored very well in school and the university.

But Mr. Lee did not apologize for it. He pointed to Britain and the United States, and the tradition of Oxbridge civil servants, and politicians in the United States that came from Ivy Leagues schools. I think he was trying to produce that same core of leaders to run Singapore. It is a fact that anyone who meets Singapore leaders, whether they are ministers or bureaucrats comment on how smart they are and what wonderful ideas they are. In fact, the policies of Singapore are very creative. And today many countries find some of our policies worth imitating or trying out.

Let me just mention a few. Our urban planning in Singapore, the economic stimulus of the year 2008 and 2009 where the finance minister said the best stimulus we can give is to keep everybody on the job, so employers were told if you keep the job, and you keep the man on the job the Government of Singapore through the job credit scheme would pay up to 12 percent of his salary up to the sum of \$2,500. Now that's a unique idea. I remember the White House was very struck by this when I explained this to them. So there was road pricing, and, in fact now, Singapore, which is water challenged, is water sufficient. This is because we found a way to produce NEWater, and turned all our drains into catchment areas for water which could be turned into NEWater and we have increased reservoirs.

So we are creative in policies with these good men and women. The flip side of this is, of course, the rise of a technocracy. As with all technocrats, they can make mistakes and do. Some policies don't work as well as they are supposed to. As is common in political life, policies that are well-conceived and are successful and work are usually regarded by people as inevitable. It is the mistakes that catches attention and are magnified and criticized. So we have technocrats, we have an intelligent group of civil servants and ministers and they produce the results for Singapore.

Mr. Lee ties governance and leadership together. He believes that societies are subject to social forces. They do not become successful automatically, he says. He believes

in the rule of law and institutions to create a good society, but he argues institutions are only as good as the people who run them. Good governance needs leaders with the right values, a sense of service, and ability. He emphasizes this, and as such he has talked of the excellence of the civil service that he builds.

If you speak to any of our civil servants they will tell you, policy is implementation; implementation is policy. Because you've got to be able to carry it out. He was one person who believed in details. He has a big picture, but he's great at looking at details. Together with implementation of policy I think Mr. Lee requires boldness in ideas in the civil service.

Now, when speaking of the civil service and the quality of the civil service I must also touch in the high salaries for ministers and civil servants. Mr. Lee believed in offering incentives for good people to join public life. In the 1990s this was a heated subject of debate. But let me say that Mr. Lee did not begin in the 1990s to think of paying ministers and civil servants well.

In fact, in 1966 in an interview with the press, and Singapore had just become independent a year (ago). He said he worries with so many distractions how can he, in fact, get good people to come into the civil service which was so important for Singapore, to join the public service of Singapore. So Singapore paid very good salaries for ministers and for civil servants. But this has become a hot button issue, and in the elections of 2011, you know, there was a crescendo of this.

Now, after the May 2011 general elections the government appointed a commission which made a recommendation of pay cuts for the ministers. The commission, in fact, recommended that the president of Singapore would receive a 51 percent pay cut in his salary. He was then paid \$1.1 million. The prime minister received a 36 percent pay cut in his salary, and he's paid \$1.62 million on the grounds that the prime minister -- the scope of his work is much larger than that of the president's. Ministers received a 37 percent pay cut, and the lowest of the ministers received something like US\$600,000. So that was a drastic cut.

I would say since that pay cut - the commission announcing the pay cuts -the boil has been lanced in Singapore. I think there is less criticism, though the issue is not completely off the table. It's always going to be there. But I think the idea that you have to pay really decent pay and competitive salaries to get good men and women to work in the public service and to join politics is still in Singapore. Frankly, when we talk about this before foreign audiences most of the foreign audiences say this is the right policy. If you don't pay politicians you do not get good people into politics and they do all kinds of things as well.

I cannot leave the subject of institutions and men without saying a little bit about rule of law in Singapore. Mr. Lee Kuan Yew has made hundreds of speeches mentioning rule of law. He does this very frequently. In fact, we are a society that abides by the rule of law. Now, some people have attacked us and said, it's not rule of law. It is ruled by law. I read the essay by the former Chief Justice of Singapore who explained rule of law in this way. There is liberal rule of law which encompasses human rights democracy, and

there is A.V. Dicey, the Oxford Law professor who wrote the tome on constitutional law is the dicey version of -- it's a very well-respected British professor on rule of law.

The three views of Dicey' rule of law is the supremacy of the law over arbitrary power. Second view, the equality before the law. The third view, that the general principles of the constitution, such as individual rights, are found in the decisions of the courts based on common law. But Dicey does not elaborate very much on the morality of the law or the fairness of the law. It's just to the law.

I would say Mr. Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore we are between the two definitions. The Dicey definition of law is by legal scholars known as the thin rule of law definition. Then there is the liberal rule of law definition, and we stand somewhere in between. Mr. Lee's view of rule of law is, in fact, encompassed in this, and let me read this. In the essay on law and politics, a former chief justice says, Mr. Lee's rule of law has the following propositions: That the state may only exercise power in accordance with the law. Secondly, everyone is equal before the law, and equally subject to the law, and any citizen can find redress against another, including the government, for any act which involves a breach in the law. Thirdly, the purpose of the rule of law is to produce order and justice in the relations between man and man, between man and the state.

The rule of law, in fact, requires that judges be independent, so they can decide disputes impartially without interference from any party including that of the government. And that it is necessary to protect the integrity and sovereignty of the state and maintain law and order so that you can create an orderly and safe environment where people can live in the safety, peace, and harmony to that end.

In our rule of law we do have the Internal Security Act which allows for detention without trial, but you have to produce habeas corpus. I think in today's world, given the threats of terrorism, I think many people are beginning to see some reason for the existence of this law.

Now, in the rule of law -- so the former Minister of Law, Mr. S. Jayakumar said, Mr. Lee's single-minded goal was to make sure Singapore would succeed and law was an instrument to give effect to this overall strategy and vision of the country. If new laws are needed the laws had to be amended, and the attitude was get it done to ensure policy is effectively implemented. He was not averse to trying out novel and unusual solutions. This is because Singapore's situation and circumstances were unusual.

So in Singapore we have a land acquisition act so that we can build roads, we can build airports, et cetera. There is compensation which the commission will give, and it will not be exactly market price, but close to market price. So we make allowance for such law. Then recently we had the en bloc sale of buildings, the law was passed. If you want to sell the block and 80 percent of the residents in that block agree to sell it you can sell it. You may have bought your apartment for \$400,000. If the developer is prepared to offer you \$2 million for it, why not? So 80 percent of the signatures must be got, this is private property. So we do make some -- there are some creative new ideas in the law.

Now, in actually pursuing the rule of law the minister of law said that the fact

that Mr. Lee Kuan Yew had a British education and was exposed in Britain for such a long time increased his view of fair play, which is why he retained judicial review, ensuring that public bodies such as statutory powers behaved legally and fairly. In our commercial law, he said to Singapore lawyers, the AG's chambers, do not reinvent the wheel. Go to the United States, United Kingdom, and Europe and see what they do about commercial law, and I think we borrowed quite a bit from that. Today Singapore is a major arbitration center where people have some trust in the courts and the way they adjudicate.

Now, the third point which I would like to highlight is that Mr. Lee believes Singapore must be pragmatic. I won't dwell on it since Shashi has just mentioned it that really in Singapore there are no ideologies. If we have an ideology it is pragmatism. Mr. Lee describes himself as pragmatic. In fact, in 1978 in a speech before the 26th World Congress of the International Chamber of Commerce Mr. Lee said, "I read up the theories and half believed in them, but we were sufficiently practical and pragmatic enough not to be cluttered by theories. If a thing works, let's work it." That eventually developed into the kind of economy we have.

Our test it is, does it work? Does it bring benefits to the people? Our first objective is to get the economy going, to provide jobs, and to feed the people so they can live. So we welcomed MNCs at a time, 1960s, 70s, when the whole world, the development world was against MNCs, because MNCs exploited, but we welcomed them. And they provided the jobs, we learned from them. So we've been always adjusting in a practical way.

Let me say that there's a big myth that in Singapore everything is planned down to the nth degree. You know, people who work in the public service and work on the ideas will tell you this is far from the truth, and government does not really operate in a fail-safe mode. Many of our big leaps forward were leaps of faith, said Peter Ho, our head of the civil service. For instance, when we built Tanjong Pagar into a container port. Containers, as a mode of transportation was not yet proven. Yet, we went ahead with it.

To go ahead with it the minister then in charge of -- the chairman of the Port of Singapore Authority got in foreign consultants because everyone in Singapore turned the idea down. He got the foreign consultants, and after the consultants made the study they said, this is the way to go. Build a container port, and we did, and that's where we are today. We spent a lot of money on the consultants, but Mr. Howe Yoon Chong said, this is money well spent. Focus on long range thinking, but the long range thinking also plans for changes and that is important to remember. So in our pragmatism we do long range planning, but we will also, in fact, plan for change within that long range thinking.

Finally, the fourth point on governance, his fourth principle is that a society loses its vigor if it eschews excellence and competition. Equally, a society loses its cohesion if it fails to take care of those who are left behind. This principle has always been with the Singapore government. When the PAP was founded it was a democratic socialist party. In 1959 they came into power engaged in an open front with the communists.

The first areas they looked into was housing, education, and health, and Singapore needed the good policies. Today taking care of those who are left behind has become a major issue in Singapore politics. We have always provided some safety nets for

the people. Some of you may know the book of John Michael Twitt and Adrian Wooldridge, *The Fourth Revolution: The Global Race to Reinvent the State*. The authors were interested in societies. How do you run a good government? How do you produce entitlements, but yet also manage economic growth?

John Micklethwait said he spoke to Mr. Lee Kuan Yew. He said Mr. Lee practiced tough love. In other words, you have support, you give safety nets but they are properly targeted. Mr. Lee told that, you know, I watch Europe and I watch Britain, and he is really dismayed by the extent to which welfare has been abused, and he describes it as an all you can eat buffet. He did not want in Singapore to introduce an all you can eat buffet.

Now, let me say that in recent years Singapore has stepped up on its welfare benefits: the poor, the disabled, the elderly. The elderly, the aging population, is getting a lot of share. There has been very many measures introduced as subsidies. So much so that some people ask is the Singapore government becoming socialist? Well, they are not, but let me say that in a time when globalization is creating great inequalities in societies what Singapore has done, Singapore has become one of the first to start reintroducing entitlements at a level which is necessary.

It may be such that other societies will have to do that because of the inequality of the structural unemployment that is produced by globalization. But always there is this concern that you cannot leave people too far behind. Mr. Lee once said, it is unseemly in a society to see some people who suffer from such abject poverty.

Now, finally, I feel I have to touch on the authoritarian model of Singapore. Discussing its ideas would not be complete without saying a few words about it. I would say that many commentators have written about Singapore and Mr. Lee Kuan Yew authoritarian model. Indeed, many liberal academics and journalists refer to Singapore's success, but they say, at what cost?

Many also suggest that our practices are really that of soft authoritarianism. It's not real authoritarianism, it's soft. Fareed Zakaria calls Singapore an illiberal democracy. That Mr. Lee Kuan Yew is an autocrat. My sense is that with democratic governments now under stress everywhere the Singapore model is getting a second look.

Singapore is doing well in terms of the economy and social policies. I have to say that when I was doing research on this I did not see any evidence of statements from Mr. Lee Kuan Yew that he planned for centralized government from the word go. That was not in his plans in 1965 and '66. It was not in the blueprint. But the situation was precarious. Singapore became independent in '65. In 1967 the British did a defense review and said they were going to withdraw forces east of Suez, and so Singapore would be without its security protection, and the British base contributed to 30 percent of Singapore's GDP. I think this created a sense of emergency in Singapore, something has to come together very quickly.

So he worked very seriously and he thought that these are the plans that must go ahead. But frankly, the reason we had a one-party Parliament for a very long time was not anybody's doing, certainly not the government's doing, but it was the opposition party that opted to withdraw from politics. The Barisan Sosialis, which was a left wing political party,

in fact, in 1968 declared they would not run in the general elections. They had quite a reasonable presence.

They said they would not run in the elections because it was the line of the Malaysian Communist Party that Singapore's independence is phony. They should go to the streets, start guerrilla warfare, not do constitutional politics. I think that was how, suddenly, the Parliament was without an opposition presence. Well, it was handed over to the People's Action Party, and they became the only party in Parliament. Of course they liked it. It's easy to pass bills and so on.

It was not until 1981 that the opposition, one opposition member, came back again. So to say that Mr. Lee started being authoritarian, it is not true. It was there. So I think the circumstances have shaped it. But the sense is this, Mr. Lee has often talked of phases of development, and at certain phases of development you have certain kinds of government.

Today I think you will find Singapore much changed. In fact, we say Singapore politics is normalizing. Opposition parties are getting seats in Parliament, and opposition parties got the seats in Parliament. Young people have diverse views and the diverse views are expressed. Singapore is, in fact, the government is, in fact, embracing the changes. In a sense you can say, Singapore.. South Korea, to some extent the economy Taiwan, and Singapore are countries that followed a centralized authoritarian model, but is now changing. Building a middle class and getting ready for stable democratic politics.

Will Mr. Lee's ideas last? I would say millennials in Singapore have different ideas, but I do hope they have enough sense to understand what works for Singapore and preserve that which works and adjust some of the ideas to the present time. Mr. Lee in the last few years have said what happens in Singapore in the future really depends on the young leaders and the next generation of leaders. He leaves it up to them. Thank you.

BILAHARI KAUSIKAN: Mr. Talbott, Martin, Joe, Richard, thank you for inviting me to talk to you this morning. My task is to talk to you about Singapore's foreign policy. I hope you do not conclude that it was an act of reckless folly to invite me to talk to you this morning. To minimize that risk, I am going to be very brief.

Singapore is a very unnatural place. Mr. Lee Kuan Yew was once on record as saying, small island city-states are a political joke. As Heng Chee told you, he did not believe that Singapore could be independent, so we had independence thrust upon us and had to make the best of it.

The essence of Singapore's foreign policy can be summed up in the first premise from which we start devising policy. That small states are intrinsically irrelevant in the world. Relevance for small states is an artifact to be created by human endeavor and having been created, has to be maintained by human endeavor. That is the basic strategic imperative of Singapore's foreign policy, to create relevance.

How do you do it? There is no magic formula. There is no master plan. There cannot be because what makes you relevant today vis-à-vis country A may be quite irrelevant

vis-à-vis country B, and what was relevant today may be irrelevant in a week or a month or a year. In short, it is a process of constant adaptation. All foreign policy for countries big and small is a constant process of adaptation. For the very simple reason is that the world cannot be predicted. You will always be ambushed by events, and you have to develop the capability to respond to them quickly.

But there are some basic principles, I think. Heng Chee spoke about the governance model. You cannot be relevant if you are a failed state. You cannot be relevant if you are just an ordinary country if you are small. Some of my colleagues, Kishore, for example, are fond of talking about Singapore as a think-tank state, coming up with new ideas. That's true, we try, but I think Mr. Lee would not disagree if I say that the most brilliant idea of a small country can be ignored if inconvenient. Whereas, the stupidest idea of a large company has to be taken seriously because of the damage stupid ideas of large countries can do, and we've seen some evidence of this recently in the Middle East, for example.

Heng Chee talked about being extraordinary. A small country cannot just be an ordinary success. Because if you are just like your neighbors why would anybody want to deal with you rather than larger, better endowed countries? You have to be extraordinary. But we are not just a small country anywhere. We are a small country in Southeast Asia, and that environment prescribes certain constraints and certain imperatives for your foreign policy.

Singapore was expelled from Malaysia for a very simple reason. Because we organized ourselves on the basis of multiracial meritocracy. Whereas, our neighbors organized themselves on rather different principles, the political dominance of one race or one religion. That tension between two different models of governance is the existential problem of Singapore. Because if you are extraordinary your very existence is taken as a criticism of alternative systems. If you are a failure everybody will pat us on the head and say, oh poor thing, you know, you're all right. But if you are successful, as we must be, then you are not necessarily popular.

Foreign policy is not about being popular. I learned this from Mr. Lee Kuan Yew as a very young diplomat. It is about getting your way, preferably by being nice, but if necessary by any means necessary. That is the be all and end all of Singapore's foreign policy. Of course, the specifics are subject to the, you know, myriad variety of life, the constant adaptation, and the environment for us is getting more and more difficult.

Singapore became independent in 1965. The most salient international fact in 1965 was the Cold War. The Cold War was an extremely dangerous period, but it had one virtue, that of clarity. You know where you were. You are here or you are there. Even if you pretended to be on the line you had to take your alignment from the Cold War division. We are now in a much more complicated international environment where these simple certainties have dissolved. They will not be recreated.

It is becoming much more difficult for a small country like Singapore to pick the means of creating relevance in a very ambiguous environment. It's not unique to Singapore, but for a small country it is uniquely -- the dilemma is uniquely focused because small countries do not have margins for error. Small countries are constantly maneuvering to

position themselves to create relevance, to get out of harm's way, or to seize the opportunity that may be thrown out by events. It's much more difficult now.

Secondly, I think our domestic environment is much more complex. When I joined the Foreign Service about 34 years ago we were very fortunate because nobody was interested in foreign policy, so more or less you had a free hand, the government. I'm afraid that that is passing, but the greater interest in foreign policy is not matched by a greater awareness of the limits of what a small state can or cannot do.

My younger colleagues, some of them sitting there, all know a Singapore that is prosperous. This is not that natural state of affairs. Singapore is a very unnatural place, completely -- an artificial creation. I am afraid that the emerging foreign policy debate in Singapore is one that is completely ignorant of some of the realities of foreign policy in Singapore. At this conference that resulted in the book I was asked a question by a PhD candidate, a young Singapore woman writing her PhD in international relations. I must admit that the question quite flummoxed me, and it confirmed all my prejudices about the academic studies of international relations.

She asked me, why can't Singapore have a foreign policy like Denmark or Switzerland? And the obvious answer is because we are not Denmark or Switzerland. We live in Southeast Asia, not Northern Europe. But that a PhD candidate - I think she is quite an intelligent person despite doing a PhD - could ask such a question in seriousness worried me a lot. I think this is the key issue about Singapore's future. Do our younger generation just -- does our younger generation take the prosperity they see around them for granted? Do they understand that it is utterly manmade, artificial? Or do they take it as the natural order of things? If it is the latter then I'm afraid we are going to go the way of all city-states throughout history.

Let me end with one simple point, to reinforce the point that small countries are irrelevant, and you cannot take your relevance for granted. Now, modern Singapore was founded as a trading center, a hub for trade, a hub for logistics, a hub for finance for trade. We have performed those functions as a British colony, as part of Malaysia, and as an independent and sovereign country. The point being that sovereignty and independence is not a necessary condition for you to perform these functions. You could well perform this function, and we have, as part of another country, under the thumb of another country. It is not, therefore, to be taken for granted.

So I leave you with that thought. We have been around for 50 years. I hope we are going to be around for at least another 50 years, if not 150 years. But it is not something I take for granted. Thank you.

JOSEPH LIOW: Ladies and gentleman, good morning. Now we move onto the question and answer session. I will not, of course, attempt to summarize two very airtight presentations that have laid out for you not just the fundamental principles behind Mr. Lee Kuan Yew's leadership and thinking, but really how that formed the basis for the creation of what's thought about as an impossible nation, as we have heard.

So let me just move the discussion very quickly to the floor, to your questions,

which I'm sure you have quite a number. Can I request that in the interest of time you keep your remarks, comments, and questions short and sweet, and if you can identify yourself when you ask a question. Thank you. Yes, sir.

QUESTION: I'm Kent Calder from SAIS Johns Hopkins University. First, I have to say that was an absolutely fascinating set of presentations. My question had to do with the very last comment by Mr. Kausikan. Namely, you were saying sovereignty is not needed for these functions, that trade can be performed in any way, but isn't still the sovereignty, the legitimacy, the membership in a whole range of organizations, the top level contacts that one naturally gets as a nation state that's as flexible as you are, doesn't that feed back into a number of things that you are increasingly able to do in the system now?

Thinking about operating at various levels your global smart cities programs. A whole range of new initiatives. Your world-wide conferences that you have, don't you have a lot more legitimacy and flexibility because you are a nation state in that respect?

MR. KAUSIKAN: Yeah, of course. I mean, of course. But my point was a slightly different one. That the core functions that enable us to make a living are not -- we have done the same things as a British colony, as part of Malaysia, and as a nation state. Of course, being a sovereign state you have more flexibility. You have a greater range of possibilities. But it is not absolutely essential.

DR. CHAN: You have more power.

MR. KAUSIKAN: You have more -- no, you don't -- you have more autonomy. You have more autonomy to choose things to devise new policies, to experiment.

But my point is a simple one that, you know, if you are -- we fall under the sovereignty of one country or another, a large country. You can still perform these functions, but without the same degree of autonomy. Within parameters defined by somebody else for you.

DR. LIOW: Yes?

QUESTION: Your neighborhood looks somewhat different than it did, let's say 15 to 20 years ago, China, India rising, issues in Thailand, Malaysia, changes in Indonesia. I wonder how you would evaluate what anxieties -- what are your principle anxieties about the changes in the neighborhood in the last 10 to 15 years? And what do you think is better now than what you were facing 10 or 15 years ago?

MR. KAUSIKAN: I'll go first. I think the neighborhood has become much more complex, but if you cross your mind back, Jeff, to where we started in 1965. 1965, Singapore had just been expelled from Malaysia, and the relationship was fraught with racial tension. The possibility of a forcible reintegration was not an impossible one.

Indonesia was still fighting an undeclared war called Confrontation against Singapore and Malaysia. The Philippines was claiming a huge chunk of Malaysia, Sabah. There were irredentist tensions between southern Thailand and northern west Malaysia,

southern Philippines and parts of Indonesia. There were active communist insurgencies in Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, and there was an abortive, communist attempt at coup in Indonesia. In Indo-China the core was quite hot.

If you start from that base the complications of today are small beans. Now, there are very serious questions. I think many countries in Southeast Asia are undergoing political changes. Not merely routine changes of government or personalities, but systemic changes. You have Myanmar on a new trajectory, but I, at least, do not believe that this is an irreversible trajectory.

You have Thailand in a kind of frozen political transition. You have Malaysia where you have a tried and true political model in the process of transition to what? Nobody knows. You have Indonesia. I, at least, and this is a controversial point, but I, at least, believe that Indonesia has yet to come to a stable post-Suharto equilibrium. And you can go on.

But, as I said, these are actually, if you compare from where we came these are fairly manageable problems. Certainly if you look at Southeast Asia or East Asia as a whole, with all the complications of adjustments between major powers, both influencing these internal transitions and being influenced by the external things. If you compare it to where we came from this is actually not that difficult.

My main concerns are actually internal. I think Singapore can cope. We certainly have much more capability to cope, to adapt in the economic field, the foreign policy field, the defense field. But whether or not a different generation has the will and the nous to do these adaptations is another matter.

Now, I did not mention one fact. In order to create relevance, in order to constantly adapt you have to have a very clinical, indeed, cold-blooded ability to assess your situation. All diplomats talk a lot of rubbish. We talk about principles, we talk, you know, highfalutin rubbish. But it is fatal to believe your own propaganda. Now, I am not entirely confident that -- no, I'm not talking about my colleagues in the foreign ministry. They are, of course, fine people, you know, outstanding, you know, with my future in them I sleep easy at night. I'm talking about the population as a whole. I fear that they are beginning to believe our own propaganda. So I have seen the enemy, it is us.

DR. CHAN: I'd like to just add to that. I would have begun by reflecting on what Singapore is today. I think, you know, if you ask me, Singaporeans do not generally ask themselves how has a situation changed. Foreign policy, for a very long time, has been an elite preoccupation. It's in the hands of the foreign ministry and the politicians.

Increasingly though, I think younger people and the electorate they have a view about foreign policy. It's incoherent and it's not exactly clear --

MR. KAUSIKAN: They'd be stupid to, but never mind.

DR. CHAN: But government now has to deal with that. And so it's no longer just an insulated exercise of working out your policies. By the way, it's the same with all the

countries around.

In the 1960s when we became independent most of the countries were, in fact, not very democratic. In fact, it's an elite power. Foreign policy is what the president or prime minister decides to enact. So things are complicated now, but I think it's because of, to some extent, the democratization of foreign policy.

But what has changed is that Singapore today has better wherewithal to deal with the outside world. People are better educated, institutions are stronger, and we've become a far more complex state. We have reached out and networked with many countries. I hope, to that extent, it helps to strengthen our position.

DR. LIOW: I'll take a group of questions. Ma'am? Sir? Here in the front.

QUESTION: Thank you for your presentation, it was wonderful. It's really wonderful. My question is we are from the Asian countries, and I've been here in the United States since about the same time of your independence, but I see two totally different directions. We know this war is -- freer capitalism is failing us. So I just wonder if you're saying a GDP or you will say about an unemployment there's wonderful news? But even you said he want to wait for a younger generation to do something. That really depends on us. How do we give them the good value? Now, all I want is the biggest profit, the best money they can get. That's totally deteriorating all our moral values.

So I just wonder whether in your independence process do you really instill people with a good sense of justice? How do you evaluate the people for their contributions to conserve the public services rather than depend on whether their connection is wealthy or a corrupt politician? Whether you will have a good moral value training from the younger generation from the pre-K and then to the PhD. PhD is very important because America fail us because they don't really have a good PhD, even from Harvard.

DR. LIOW: Ma'am, can we move on. We need to. Another question there. Thank you for your question.

QUESTION: I'm Mark Brodsky, retired CEO and physicist. What are the relevance of these big ideas for what may be similar emerging city-states in the Middle East by Abu Dhabi, etcetera?

DR. LIOW: Can I take one last question? There was a hand there. I'm afraid this will have to be the last question.

QUESTION: My name is Beverly Hong-Fincher. I'd like to know what makes Lee Kuan Yew so intelligent and practical? So there must be a think-tank of people behind him. I can think of at least one, Wang Gungwu is at least one of them. Can you just tell us what makes him, you know, wise and practical? Thank you.

DR. LIOW: Probably his parents.

MS. HONG-FINCHER: By the way, thank you. As a former A&U colleague

I'd like to welcome Dr. Chan here. Thank you.

DR. CHAN: Shashi probably can answer.

DR. JAYAKUMAR: I can try. I can try.

MR. KAUSIKAN: Probably it is a necessity.

DR. CHAN: Well -- sorry. Let Shashi speak.

DR. JAYAKUMAR: Let me try to take certain aspects of that question. You know, Mr. Lee in his asides, which he makes from time to time, makes allusions to how history can be a very, very tough judge on you after you are gone. He does not dwell on this subject, but he's clear in a way that after he's not around people will pore through his life story, his history, his papers, and try to answer certain questions. One of which you have just posed.

I think you need to look at his family milieu. Brought up in Peranakan which is straight-born Chinese. Meaning not from China, China, not fresh off the boat, household, strict disciplinarian parents. I guess if you were to have asked Mr. Lee that question when he was going through this, sort of, long period where he was fascinated by what I will call eugenics, although he would disagree. He would credit his genes.

However, if you pore through his family tree, and he's on record as saying this, his mom raised him. His dad was from time to time not around, abusive, or gambling most of the time. Hence his lifelong aversion to gambling. However, it's clear he was an intelligent kid. He went to Cambridge, as did his wife, and they both got double firsts there.

He had, and I'm coming to your point here, a milieu or coterie of people who are fabulous advisors. In at least one case, Dr. Goh Keng Swee, intellectually he is his equal. That first generation of leadership, I think, sharpened and nurtured his mind.

I think the more interesting question, which has not been asked which is how is it that he came to leadership? The politics of it and the infighting almost to the man are born, as it was. Because he came back from Cambridge intent on a law career. How is it that he was not just thrown in the deep end in what was first an anti-colonial struggle? But he took to it, the evidence is out there, like a duck to water, on the campaign trail, learning languages, the necessary languages on the hoof while he was on the campaign trail. While he was hobnobbing and plotting machinations against his fellow travelers, the communists, whom he later turned against.

I think that's the one big question which has not been answered, but certainly for the political intelligence, he had people who would come up to him, like, Goh Keng Swee and Rajaratnam. Harry, this paper on military armaments, you have to read this. He's on record as saying, I'm not that keen. I've got other things to do. Read this, and he reads it. He absorbs. He absorbs remarkably quickly. That part, how he gets this sheer absorptive capacity, intellectual curiosity, I don't know.

I would say Wang Gungwu does not make Harry Lee intelligent. He makes it a point, Lee Kuan Yew to have, firstly in the top tier leadership public service, and then in academia, the fundamental, the intelligence, people who have something good to offer who will, from time to time, come up with nuggets, insights, and perspectives which are for the future good for Singapore. I think that goes back to the question you raised at the beginning. The best. The best have to give their views. It's a loss to Singapore if even a few slip through the net.

DR. CHAN: I'll try to answer the three questions very briefly. First question, following up from Shashi, I agree to everything he said, but I would also emphasize that Chinese culture is a very pragmatic culture. It's materialistic and pragmatic. I think Lee Kuan Yew derives that from that part. Then he was educated in Brittan, and admires the British. That's Victorian and pragmatic also, so it's double-dose of pragmatism. Chinese pragmatism and English pragmatism. So we have Singapore built from there.

I think, you know, as a person he, himself, has often talked about genes. I think he is born an intelligent person. Because he mixed in the company of intelligent people, and as he went along he got more intelligent. But he's got a very shrewd political sense, and that is hard to account where he got that from. After he became a prime minister at 35 years old, and he survived the Japanese occupation, that ages you and makes you shrewd, and you are a survivor. So he's a survivor.

Now, let me answer the question that Mark Brodsky brought up. How are these big ideas relevant to other countries? Interestingly, you mentioned, you know, the Gulf States because they do come to Singapore to see what they can learn from Singapore. I imagine that they would have seen that Singapore emphasizes rule of law, emphasize connectivity to the outside region, and to work with them. I think that must appeal to them.

MR. KAUSIKAN: I have a slightly different view.

DR. CHAN: Let me finish, okay. But I think for the Gulf States they see that you have to be extraordinary to succeed. I think they bought that. That, you know, for a small country to succeed you must be extraordinary in your region. So Dubai became very extraordinary, and Qatar then tried to be extraordinary in a different sense from Dubai. So, you know, they're trying to, you know, do something different.

Different countries come to Singapore to take different aspects. Some like the idea of the non-corruption that you've got to have, like, first of all, standards in how you develop your government. But I don't think many have been as systematic and as relentless in implementing what we have. The idea of picking on top brains, the best people, but it's not just brains and qualifications. It's character. You know, you have to have a sense of integrity and commitment. That seems very important.

I'm sure Mr. Lee says, you know, I'm trying to get as many as I can of that. Don't know that I get it all the time, but I want.

The last question was the lady sitting up here about values. Do we pass this on to younger people? You try. Demonstration, examples, you know, and in the schools you

teach values, but you cannot be taught. I think Singapore is value didactic because when we began the leaders gave a lot of speeches. The speeches were in the newspapers every day. Later they changed the style because they realized, you know, the population didn't take so much to it, and being pragmatic they didn't do that as much anymore.

So young people see what's happening. They are told some things, and you hope that they learn by being in an organization, by being in a school, by working with people. But the one thing about the top civil servants, and this was highlighted by the former head of civil service, Peter Ho. He said that all the top civil servants became the way they were because they worked personally with Mr. Lee Kuan Yew. Now that the younger, you know, civil servants don't have that opportunity they wonder, he wonders, if they will, you know, understand the values as he has propounded without seeing him practice it and live it.

So I think, in fact, Mr. Lee if you look at all his recent statements he's quite open-minded. He's resigned. He hopes for the best that his ideas -- he says he's done his job. He has no regrets. He's done what he can to keep Singapore strong, safe, and to give a future for Singapore and a vision for Singapore. He just hopes it can continue. So, you know, he's quite -- and I do hope Singaporeans, younger Singaporeans pick up some of these ideas.

As somebody who's in that mid-generation, I try very hard to talk about it and to explain to my students and younger colleagues who work with me. They find it fascinating, but I don't know if they'll incorporate it, the values in their lives.

MR. KAUSIKAN: Let me just answer your question. I have a slightly different view from Heng Chee. Because I spent in the last few years of my career as a Permanent Secretary, quite a lot of time in that region.

I think they try to learn certain technical qualities, but I think fundamentally it is not transferable, for one very simple reason. The fundamental idea of Singapore is a meritocracy. The Gulf States are absolute monarchies. There's absolute contradiction between a monarchy and a meritocracy. So I don't think they can succeed in adopting these ideas. They try and they do it their own way, but they basically have too much money for their own good.

Singapore was able to adapt because we were poor, and that is my worry. I mean, to answer your question, now that you are not poor do you still have that hunger, that determination, and that, frankly, that ruthlessness to succeed? I doubt the Gulf States do because they are monarchies. Very small population. We are not a large population.

If any of the Gulf States are probably able to do it, it is not Dubai, it is not Qatar, it is probably Oman. Because why? They are not as rich as the others, and they are traders, not billionaires.

DR. CHAN: I should add that, you know, Singapore never started by saying we have to develop a model for others. To --

MR. KAUSIKAN: We just made it up as went along.

DR. CHAN: Made it up --

MR. KAUSIKAN: As we went along.

DR. CHAN: -- and we believed it was -- Mr. Lee was working out ideas that works for Singapore. He did not want -- you know, he had no idea that it was so salable for some --

MR. KAUSIKAN: You try something. If it doesn't work you stop doing it immediately. This sounds like a very simple thing, but my experience is --

DR. CHAN: It's very hard.

MR. KAUSIKAN: -- for most people it is very hard. Because people try, you get invested in a certain cost, and even, you know, I mean, it's a whole thing, right? When you're in a hole what do you do?

DR. CHAN: Dig yourself.

MR. KAUSIKAN: No, stop digging. It sounds simple, but I witness it over and over again. People when they're in a hole they start digging even more furiously. So I don't think the Singapore model is exactly replicable anywhere else because there is no Singapore model. We make it up as we go along.

DR. CHAN: And it's made up to fit Singapore. But when others come to ask us what can we learn? Say, okay, we want to learn, but this is how we do it.

MR. KAUSIKAN: We have a very large technical cooperation program, technical assistance, but we only start from this premise, okay, this is how we do it. You know your own country better. You see whether it can work or not.

DR. LIOW: I invite Martin to bring our proceedings to a close.

MARTIN INDYK: Thank you, Joseph. I will be very brief. I wanted to bring the discussion to a close by focusing, again, on the big ideas of Lee Kuan Yew. I want to, first of all, congratulate Shashi. I've had a chance to read this book and it's a great read and a fascinating read.

I have spent my time as the director of foreign policy at Brookings doing my best to drive a stake through the heart of edited volumes, but this one is an exception because of the rich diversity of opinions of people who actually, as Heng Chee mentioned, all of them had the opportunity to work with Lee Kuan Yew, and that's what makes it so interesting.

I, thanks to Heng Chee, had a chance to meet once with this great man. Who is, by the way, now fighting for his life, and our thoughts go out to him. The first thing that surprised me about him was that he was so tall. I don't know, is he 6'5" or something? I mean, he seems like it. He was totally intimidating.

DR. CHAN: For his generation –

MR. KAUSIKAN: It's tall.

DR. INDYK: I met him in the midst of the Arab Spring, and you won't be surprised that he was totally skeptical about where it was going. Naturally, given his experience, believed strongly that the only way that this could come out well was if strong, i.e. authoritarian leaders emerged again from this democratic effort. Of course, on this and so many other things, he proved himself to be right.

The thing that is most striking about Lee Kuan Yew for us here at Brookings in Washington, and why we decided to create a chair in Southeast Asian studies in his honor that will live on. It's a chair therefore it will live on in perpetuity. It's because of his affection for the United States, his understanding for the United States.

It's noted in one of these essays, I think by Bilahari, that he saw the United States as a benign power, not a country that acquired territories, but fought for a cause. Of course that can be, on occasions, our downfall. But nevertheless, his attraction to the United States, his understanding of us, and his willingness to speak truth to power was critically important.

I think that, again, it's referred to in the book that Singapore's foreign policy, he felt, was best served by ensuring that views that are going in the wrong direction do not go unchecked. You both talked about that principle being applied to Singapore, but it's a principle that Singapore has helped the United States, and particularly Lee Kuan Yew has helped the United States, apply to ourselves.

Singapore lives in the strategic environment. Lee Kuan Yew understood that better than anybody else. He was, therefore, best able to appreciate the dangers involved in strategic environments. We in the United States do not live in a strategic environment. We're a very big country, and we have friendly neighbors who will remain friendly for the foreseeable future.

It's a very different situation. That's why his judgments, his appreciation of the importance, for example, of the United States and China getting along, and the way in which he devoted himself to that effort to try to promote understanding between China and the United States. All of those things that he represented, that he understood will live on for a very long time.

I hope that because we've been able to create the Lee Kuan Yew chair, and I should say in closing that it was only possible because of Heng Chee Chan's belief in this idea and help in creating that chair, that in this way we can uphold the ideas that are so well presented in the book, and so well presented today in this panel discussion. So I want to thank you all very much.

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