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## OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSH TO BOLSTER THE U.S.-SINGAPORE RELATIONSHIP

### INTRODUCTION

It is a country the size of Chicago. Its predominantly Chinese population of 2.6 million is dwarfed by neighboring Indonesia's 180 million. An island-state, it has no major agricultural production and is thus dependent on outside sources for its food — and, indeed, for all other natural resources.

Despite these limitations, the Republic of Singapore has become a major regional power and, in global terms, a very influential nation. Within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN<sup>1</sup>), only Singapore has reached so-called Newly Industrializing Country status by achieving a per capita income above \$2,000 and employing a quarter of its work force in the manufacturing sector. In fact, in 1987, its per capita income was \$7,413, the nineteenth largest in the world and higher than that of NATO members Portugal, Spain, and Turkey. Its gross national product has grown over 9 percent annually since 1965, the highest rate in Southeast Asia, making Singapore a model of successful free enterprise for the Third World.

**World's Busiest Port.** Strategically, Singapore straddles one of the world's most important choke points: the Strait of Malacca. Through this waterway passes 80 percent of the oil and petroleum products destined for Japan and other U.S. allies in Northeast Asia. Singapore services this traffic with the

1 Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

world's third largest oil refinery and the world's third largest harbor, handling 113 million freight tons annually, more cargo tonnage than any other port in the world.

More than almost any country in the region, Singapore firmly supports the West and is an important anticommunist voice in such international bodies as the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement. In September 1983, for example, Singapore made one of the harshest condemnations of the Soviet Union in the U.N. General Assembly in the wake of Moscow's attack on Korean Airlines Flight 007.

**Bolstering U.S. Security.** U.S. relations with Singapore long have been close. While initially leery of Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's espoused socialist ideals, Washington over the last two decades has appreciated Lee's support of free enterprise and staunch opposition to communism. In the late 1960s, for example, Lee strongly supported American efforts to assist the Republic of Vietnam, in sharp contrast to the bitter criticism offered by some of America's "friends."

During the last two decades, Singapore became ever more important to U.S. security needs. The 1973 oil shock underscored Singapore's position in keeping open critical sea choke points. Singapore also has been a leader in calling for international assistance for the noncommunist Cambodian resistance against the Vietnamese occupation army. Singapore consistently has supported the presence of U.S. bases in the Philippines and is considered a possible relocation or replenishment site for some American forces should the U.S. be forced to leave Clark Air Force Base and the Subic Naval Facility in the Philippines. U.S.-Singapore trade, meanwhile, has doubled in the last seven years, with bilateral trade totaling \$10.5 billion in 1987. Tiny Singapore now is the fourteenth largest U.S. trading partner, just after the Netherlands and Belgium.

**War of Words.** U.S.-Singapore ties were bruised last May when Singaporean authorities expelled U.S. Embassy First Secretary E. Mason Hendrickson. He was charged with involving himself in domestic politics by encouraging prominent Singapore lawyer Francis Seow to run against the Prime Minister's People's Action Party during the October national elections. The very public manner in which Singapore handled the Hendrickson matter may have reflected Singapore's anger at Washington's January 1988 decision to end by 1989 the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) privileges exempting 25 percent of Singapore's exports to the U.S. from American duties. This was done this month. Washington responded to Hendrickson's ouster by expelling a Singaporean diplomat of equal rank from Washington. This was followed by a month-long war of words.

While the Hendrickson affair is now well in the past, the future of U.S.-Singapore relations again may well come under strain. Example: if the U.S. Congress were to erect protectionist barriers against Southeast Asian

goods, free-trading nations like Singapore would suffer and be forced to seek alternative markets to the U.S. Further strains may result from continued U.S. human rights criticism of Singapore. Just last month, eight U.S. Congressmen sent a letter to the Singapore government calling for the release of four persons detained without trial.

Both countries, moreover, will be going through a political transition over the next couple of years, as George Bush familiarizes himself with the presidency and Lee Kuan Yew transfers power to younger members of his People's Action Party. To prevent a repeat of the Hendrickson affair and strengthen U.S.-Singapore cooperation, the Bush Administration should:

- ◆◆ Oppose protectionist measures aimed at Singapore by forging a coalition with anti-protectionist members of Congress and private interest groups.

- ◆◆ Begin talks on a U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Area (FTA).

- ◆◆ Cooperate with Singapore to increase world support for the Cambodian noncommunist resistance and to ensure the withdrawal of all Vietnamese forces from Cambodia by 1990.

- ◆◆ Urge Singapore to refrain from trading with Vietnam until Hanoi withdraws from Cambodia.

- ◆◆ Plan for Bush to visit Singapore as part of an Asian trip in the first year of his presidency.

- ◆◆ Invite Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew to the U.S. within the first two years of the Bush presidency.

- ◆◆ Explore the feasibility of establishing an American University in Singapore.

## SOUTHEAST ASIA'S FIRST MIRACLE

When the English government representative Sir Thomas Raffles arrived in Singapore in 1819, he found only a small Malay fishing community. Yet he recognized Singapore's location astride the important shipping route through the Strait of Malacca as a perfect site for an intermediary trading post.

To administer Singapore, the British brought in Chinese from Hainan Island and southeastern China. The resulting predominantly Chinese immigrant population was treated as a junior partner of the English and spared the harsher treatment of the resident population that the Dutch imposed in Indonesia or the Japanese in Korea.

The British controlled Singapore until Japanese forces swept through Southeast Asia and conquered the island nation on February 15, 1942. British rule was restored in 1946. Thirteen years later, Singapore, under the leadership of the People's Action Party (PAP), became a self-governing regime within the British colony of Malaya.

**Neutralizing Communists.** With Lee Kuan Yew, a British-educated labor lawyer at its helm, the PAP has combined the socialist ideal of a welfare state with strong free market principles. Lee quickly realized, moreover, that Chinese communism threatened Malaya and Singapore. Instead of responding militarily to this threat, as the British had done in Malaya, Lee neutralized the communist opposition through arrests and detentions and by letting the communists destroy themselves with their factional infighting.

From 1963 to 1965, Singapore was granted independence from Britain as part of the new Federation of Malaysia. In 1965, Singapore broke from the Federation and became a fully sovereign republic headed by Prime Minister Lee. The island republic soon faced a tremendous economic setback when the British government announced in 1967 its intent to withdraw its forces from Singapore. Because this meant losing the 20 percent of its gross domestic product gained from services provided to the British bases, the Singapore government decided to shift its economy toward manufacturing for export.

**Premature Expansion.** Assisted by its \$10 million a month in exports to South Vietnam during the height of the Vietnam War, Singapore was able to convert from a service to a manufacturing economy by 1978. Singapore also became a leading transshipment point and refining center for oil and petroleum products destined for Northeast Asia. The 1979 oil shock, however, cut deep into Singapore's shipping revenues, and its economy suffered further when the government prematurely attempted to shift production toward more expensive goods. At the time, foreign companies, particularly Japanese, were unprepared to provide the necessary financing and technology for such a transition. As a result, Singapore's gross national product in 1985 declined for the first time.

As part of an effort to reinvigorate Singapore's economic performance, the government commissioned a 1986 study to suggest economic reforms. The commission suggested wage restraints, reduction of expensive exports, and a return to producing fewer technology-intensive products in competition with those sold by the Republic of China on Taiwan, South Korea and, increasingly, the People's Republic of China. The government adopted these proposals. Its GNP grew 1.8 percent in 1986 and 8.8 percent in 1987; a 9 percent growth rate has been estimated for last year. This growth has given Singapore the region's highest living standard, with a per capita income nineteen times that of Indonesia and eight times that of Thailand.

A major factor in Singapore's economic success has been its close ties to the U.S., which is Singapore's largest market. Exports to the U.S. rose from \$8.4 billion in 1983 to \$14.7 billion in 1987. For the U.S., Singapore is the fourteenth largest trading partner, with U.S. exports to Singapore inching up from \$9.6 billion in 1983 to \$10.1 billion in 1987. Washington has appreciated Singapore's staunch support for free trade, its moderating influence in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and its serving as a role model for developing nations.

**Graduating From the GSP.** Last year, however, U.S.-Singapore economic ties became strained as a result of the Reagan Administration's January 1988 announcement that the U.S. this January would end Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) privileges to Singapore, the Republic of China, Hong Kong, and South Korea. Under the GSP, almost all developing countries are exempt from duty on exports to the U.S. The system was offered to 141 nations in 1976. By 1987, however, Singapore and the three other nations cited by the Reagan Administration accounted for 60 percent of the duty-free exports to the U.S. Because these four countries clearly were no longer "developing," and because it sought to preempt U.S. congressional calls for protectionist measures against America's top trading partners, the Reagan Administration decided to end GSP privileges to these countries effective January 1989. These cuts were imposed this month.

The Singapore government has protested this decision, which it claims violates an informal understanding that its GSP status would be retained if it bowed to U.S. pressure to enforce better copyright protection of U.S. products. Singapore adopted such legislation in 1987. Singapore also points out that U.S.-based multinational corporations account for almost half of Singapore's exports to the U.S. and that they would suffer from the loss of GSP privileges.

Washington correctly has responded that the GSP was conceived as a temporary benefit to be lifted once the recipient nation develops economically. The U.S. argues that Singapore, with a per capita income of \$7,413 in 1987, clearly is a developed nation. In addition, says Washington, 75 percent of Singapore's exports to the U.S. never had been covered by the GSP. Moreover, Singapore's adoption of copyright protection is a matter of principle, not a bargaining chip, and a step that Singapore's 1986 Economic Commission itself suggested should be taken to attract foreign computer companies.

## POLITICS IN SINGAPORE: STABILITY IN CONSISTENCY

Since 1959, Singapore has been ruled by the People's Action Party under Lee Kuan Yew. Despite Singapore's economic stability, Singaporean authorities feel vulnerable to internal threats. The government, for example, worries about potential communal violence and religious extremism from its Islamic Malay minority population. In 1960, after all, communal tensions

exploded into race riots. And in 1986, Malay protests erupted following the November visit to Singapore by Israeli President Chaim Herzog.

**Responding to Threats.** The Singapore government also worries about communist threats. While the more visible communist opposition was purged from organized labor unions by the mid-1960s, the government has had to deal with recent political agitation by Marxist groups. In spring 1987, for example, 22 Marxist sympathizers were detained without trial for allegedly attempting to infiltrate Singaporean political parties and social groups. Several were rearrested last April and December. Human rights groups such as Amnesty International remain critical of Singaporean conduct during the arrests. The U.S. government, meanwhile, has opposed Singapore's prolonged detention of some defendants without trial.

The Singapore government has responded to other perceived threats and challenges to its authority. In mid-1987, for example, it restricted sharply the circulation of *Time*, *Asiaweek*, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, and *The Asian Wall Street Journal*. The reason: printing articles critical of Singapore or refusing to publish full-length rebuttals from the Singapore government. Last April, Prime Minister Lee restated his opposition to "American-style criticism" in the media when he met with newspaper editors in Washington. Restrictions on all but *Time* are still in force.

**Expelling Diplomats.** In May 1988, the Singapore government extended its crackdown on criticism to the activities of U.S. diplomat E. Mason Hendrickson. Accused of encouraging disgruntled Singaporean lawyer Francis Seow to run against the PAP in the October national elections, Hendrickson was expelled on May 5th. The event prompted the U.S. to reciprocate by expelling Singaporean First Secretary Robert Chua from the Singapore Embassy in Washington. Singapore responded with four days of heated discussion in its Parliament during which government officials severely criticized U.S. policy. The Singapore government, moreover, openly considered forcing a reduction in the staff of the 100-strong U.S. Embassy. Not until July 1988 was the situation put to rest, following warm discussions between Secretary of State Shultz and Singaporean Foreign Minister S. Dhanabalan.

In September, Singaporeans went to the polls for their sixth national election since independence. This election was significant because Lee hinted that he would be passing the reins of leadership to the next generation in the PAP. The election gave the PAP another resounding victory; it won all but one of the 81 seats in Parliament and 61.8 percent of the popular vote. Yet, the PAP faced the most spirited opposition drive in 16 years. Since the elections, Lee has declined to indicate a date for his retirement, although his heir-apparent appears to be Deputy Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong.

## SINGAPORE'S FOREIGN POLICY

Singapore's geographic location as a largely Chinese city surrounded by its huge ethnic-Malay neighbors Indonesia and Malaysia has compounded the siege mentality of its leaders. Relations with Malaysia, on whom Singapore remains dependent for water and food supplies, have been tense at times. And then there was the frightening episode in 1963, during Indonesia's confrontation with Malaysia (the so-called Konfrontasi), when Indonesia-sponsored saboteurs were apprehended inside Singapore.

**Steadfastly Supporting the U.S.** Singapore also is worried about the spread of Chinese and Soviet influence in Southeast Asia. It was for this reason that Singapore publicly supported the U.S. action in South Vietnam against the communist Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Armed Forces. This support earned praise for Prime Minister Lee from President Lyndon Johnson during Lee's October 1967 visit to the U.S.<sup>2</sup> Much more recently, Singapore has been one of the strongest supporters of the noncommunist Cambodian resistance against Soviet-backed Vietnamese forces. Singapore, moreover, has lobbied in the United Nations on behalf of the noncommunist resistance and has provided material aid and psychological warfare training to the resistance forces.

Of significant importance to the U.S. has been Singapore's support for U.S. military bases in the Philippines. Though other ASEAN members such as Indonesia and Malaysia back these U.S. bases only quietly and unofficially, Singapore clearly has stated that the maintenance of U.S. bases in the Philippines benefits the region by providing a strategic balance to China and the Soviet Union. Should the U.S. be forced to vacate the Philippine bases, Singapore could serve as a relocation site for some of the U.S. Navy's repair and supply needs.<sup>3</sup>

Singapore looks to the U.S. as a key arms supplier. Because of the need to keep open its ports for trade, Singapore fields what for its tiny population is a large, defense-oriented, 45,000-man regular army with 182,000 reserves, a 4,500-man navy, and a 6,000-man air force. They are equipped with such sophisticated U.S. weapons as the E-2C *Hawkeye* airborne early-warning aircraft, the *Harpoon* anti-ship missile, improved *Hawk* air defense missiles, and the F-16A/B *Fighting Falcon* fighter aircraft. Singapore also receives \$50,000 annually in International Military and Education Training Funds from the U.S. for the military training of Singaporean students.

**Softening the Hard Line.** Singapore's relations with the Soviet Union generally have been shaped by Singapore's opposition to communism. For this reason, Prime Minister Lee long resisted a warming of Singapore-USSR

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2 Robert Shalpen, *Time Out of Hand* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 209.

3 *The Washington Times*, October 4, 1988, p. A2.

relations. In recent years, however, this hard line has been softened by Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's diplomatic and economic initiatives toward Southeast Asia. In July 1988, for example, Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Kamentsev led a delegation of six deputy Soviet ministers to Singapore to discuss increased economic cooperation with Singapore's Foreign Minister S. Dhanabalan. The last time a Soviet minister visited Singapore, in October 1983, he was not met by a single government official.

Singapore-Soviet trade, in fact, has been growing. Their bilateral trade totaled \$143 million in 1987, a 36 percent increase over the previous year. Cooperative ventures include the Singapore-Soviet Shipping Company, Ltd., established more than ten years ago, and the Marisco Pte. Ltd, a seafood processing company set up in 1975. Five other joint projects are under consideration in the areas of shipping, trade, and hotel construction.<sup>4</sup>

**Trading With Vietnam.** Singapore's relations with Vietnam, the chief Soviet proxy in Southeast Asia, have shown similar signs of accommodation. Although Singapore officially supports the economic embargo against Vietnam enacted by the vast majority of pro-Western nations and publicly opposes aid to strengthen the infrastructure of Vietnam until Hanoi withdraws its military forces from Cambodia, Singapore-Vietnam trade has been increasing. Singapore is second only to Japan as Vietnam's largest noncommunist trading partner, with bilateral trade in 1988 estimated at \$300 million.<sup>5</sup> A Singapore government-controlled shipyard, moreover, in 1987 provided more than \$100 million in offshore oil rig equipment for Hanoi. At the same time, however, the Singapore government publicly opposed a Japanese offer of similar assistance to Vietnam. Singaporean companies also have entered into joint ventures in ship repair facilities near Saigon.<sup>6</sup>

The Singapore government long has been a firm supporter of the noncommunist Cambodian resistance to the pro-Soviet Cambodian government now in Phnom Penh. In 1982, for example, Singapore led efforts to garner support at the United Nations for the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK), the resistance coalition composed of the two noncommunist factions and the pro-Chinese Khmer Rouge. And also in 1982, thanks in part to Singapore's efforts, the U.N. recognized the CGDK as the representative of the Cambodian people. Singapore also began training resistance radio and psychological warfare specialists and offered such material aid as powerful radio transmitters.

**Condemning the Khmer Rouge.** During the past year, Singapore's demand for Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia appears to have taken second place to its desire to neutralize the Khmer Rouge faction of the CGDK. During this November's voting in the U.N. General Assembly, for example,

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4 *FBIS-Soviet Union*, April 13, 1988, p. 21.

5 *The Washington Times*, October 10, 1988, p. A7.

6 *Financial Times*, April 28, 1987, p. 6.



Singapore joined other ASEAN members in condemning the “policies and practices of a recent past” in Cambodia, an obvious reference to the conduct of the Khmer Rouge. While the Khmer Rouge committed enormous atrocities under the leadership of Pol Pot from 1975 to 1978, the Khmer Rouge (now numbering some 40,000 guerrillas) still mounts the most effective resistance to Hanoi’s occupation. As a result, in past years, the U.N.’s Cambodian resolution focused criticism on the Vietnamese with the understanding that condemnation of the Khmer Rouge would be delayed until Hanoi had removed most of its troops from Cambodia. Singapore and other ASEAN states believed that condemning the Khmer Rouge prematurely would allow the Vietnamese to resist international pressure to withdraw from Cambodia. ASEAN states also have believed that such criticism of the Khmer Rouge would undercut the ability of the resistance to bring military pressure on the Vietnamese army in Cambodia.

In 1988, however, not only did Singapore and other ASEAN states condemn the Khmer Rouge, but they also held back their criticism of the Vietnamese. For example, Singapore criticized publicly Son Sann, the anti-communist Prime Minister of the CGDK, for attempting to amend the 1988 U.N. resolution on Cambodia with a reference to the atrocities committed by Vietnamese troops and the pro-Soviet People’s Republic of Kampuchea.

## CONCLUSION

The U.S. and Singapore boast some of the closest and longest held economic and diplomatic ties in Southeast Asia. At the same time, Singapore receives virtually no aid from the U.S. and can act as an independent moderating voice within the Non-Aligned Movement and developing country bloc within the U.N. In view of this, the rare spats between the U.S. and Singapore, like the May 1988 Hendrickson affair, are mere anomalies in a mutually beneficial relationship.

Nonetheless, with protectionist sentiment rising in the U.S. Congress, U.S.-Singapore ties cannot be taken for granted. They could become strained even in the first year of the Bush presidency. Criticism in the U.S. Congress of Singapore’s prolonged detention of four members of the political opposition may further complicate the relationship.

To help avoid future tensions in the U.S.-Singapore relationship, the Bush Administration should define clearly Singapore’s importance to the U.S. and should expand bilateral relations. To achieve this, the Bush Administration should:

**1) Oppose protectionist legislation aimed at Singapore.**

The Reagan Administration had little choice but to terminate Generalized System of Preferences privileges for the economically successful Asian

nations, including Singapore. Like Hong Kong, the Republic of China on Taiwan, and South Korea, Singapore irrefutably had graduated from developing nation status. Ending the GSP trade privileges, however, is unlikely to reduce by much Singapore's trade surplus with the U.S. This could make Singapore and the other advanced Asian nations targets of the 101st Congress' protectionist measures. At the same time, while the erecting of trade barriers by Japan, South Korea, and others understandably fuels congressional protectionist sentiment, the Congress should not assume that all Asian economies have similar barriers. Singapore, for example, is a paradigm of genuine free trade. For this reason, Singapore should be held up as a model for other developing nations; it should not be a target of misguided protectionism. President Bush should work toward forging a coalition of anti-protectionist members of Congress and private interest groups that will forcibly argue such a view.

## **2) Begin talks on a U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Area.**

To safeguard free and healthy trade between the U.S. and Singapore, both countries should begin exploring the feasibility of establishing a Free Trade Area (FTA). FTAs are bilaterally negotiated agreements to reduce over a relatively short period of time trade barriers between two trading partners. Washington already has such agreements with Israel and Canada. With the possibility that the European Community, after it achieves complete integration in 1992, will raise barriers to trade from the U.S., Japan, and elsewhere, the U.S. might find it increasingly attractive to consider FTAs with Asian nations. Singapore already is 96 percent duty-free on goods passing through its ports, making it one of the most free economies in the world. Its small, manageable size and large number of U.S.-owned multinational corporations make it an ideal choice for one of the first U.S. FTAs in Asia.

## **3) Cooperate with Singapore to increase support for the noncommunist Cambodian resistance.**

Since early in this decade, the U.S. and Singapore have provided essential material assistance to the two noncommunist factions in the Cambodian resistance. Singapore also has provided psychological warfare training and channeled material assistance to the resistance forces. This assistance, however, has been only a fraction of that necessary to transform the noncommunist resistance into a fighting force capable of countering the Khmer Rouge and pro-Soviet People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) forces supported by the Vietnamese occupation army. Hanoi continues to promise that it will withdraw all of its forces from Cambodia by 1990. This may happen. Meantime, the U.S., Singapore, and the other ASEAN states should boost significantly their assistance to the noncommunist Cambodian resistance. This would allow the noncommunists to gain the upper hand in a reorganized Cambodian government by allowing them to counter both the Vietnam-backed PRK and the Khmer Rouge. Washington specifically should encourage Singapore to restart its psychological and political warfare training

program for the resistance, increase the supply of material aid to the two noncommunist factions, and work closely with the resistance to expand the coverage of the noncommunist *Voice of Khmer* radio network.

**4) Urge Singapore to halt its non-commodity trade with Vietnam.**

The U.S. has lived up fully to its commitment to the 1978 aid embargo against Vietnam. Under the terms of the informal agreement, the U.S., ASEAN, People's Republic of China, and most Western nations promised not to consider infrastructure aid to Vietnam until Hanoi had completely withdrawn its forces from Cambodia. Washington additionally has subscribed to a full trade embargo against Hanoi, as has the PRC. While Singapore has been a highly vocal advocate of the aid embargo, it has not kept its word. Instead, it has followed Japan's example and expanded trade with Vietnam. Moreover, it has provided such infrastructure aid to Vietnam as oil-drilling equipment and assistance for the building of ship repair facilities. The embargo clearly has been a significant factor in bringing Vietnam to the negotiating table. Although Hanoi has promised to withdraw all its occupation forces by 1990, Washington should urge Singapore, Japan, and others in Asia to fulfill their commitments to a Vietnamese embargo until Hanoi makes good on its promise.

**5) Plan a presidential visit to Singapore as part of an Asian trip.**

The last U.S. presidential visit to Southeast Asia was President Reagan's May 1986 trip to Bali, Indonesia. The visit did not include a stop in Singapore, nor has an Asian visit by any other U.S. president. Bush should plan a trip to the region and visit Singapore this year. To help offset the recent diplomatic initiatives in Southeast Asia by Soviet leader Gorbachev, Bush should visit Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. In addition, Bush should instruct his cabinet members to make greater efforts at forging close links with the younger generation of leaders in Singapore's People's Action Party.

**6) Invite Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew to visit the U.S. within the first two years of the Bush presidency.**

Prime Minister Lee has made several trips to the U.S., the most recent being his April 1988 meeting with President Reagan. During these trips, Lee has had exceptional rapport with U.S. Presidents and with Congress. Given the looming regional challenges facing Washington, such as the U.S.-Philippines Base Negotiations, a visit by Lee within the first two years of the Bush Administration could help foster improved understanding and cooperation on bilateral and regional issues. In particular, Bush should work with Lee to promote free trade and a continued U.S. military presence in Southeast Asia.

**7) Explore the feasibility of establishing an American University in Singapore.**

American Universities in Europe, the Middle East, and South America provide foreign students with a U.S. education at a fraction of the cost of bringing them to the continental U.S. As such, these schools are excellent vehicles for providing U.S. educations to foreign middle-class students. The U.S. should study the feasibility of opening American universities in South and Southeast Asia. Singapore, a cosmopolitan English-speaking nation with seven international secondary schools, should be examined as a possible site for a regional American University available to Southeast Asians.



For over two decades, Singapore has been a close economic and diplomatic partner of the U.S. It stands as a model of free enterprise, an influential voice in international organizations, and an active opponent of communism in Asia. The Bush Administration must not allow strains in the U.S.-Singapore relationship to weaken bilateral ties. Instead the U.S. should foster cooperation with Singapore as a partner in free trade, advocate of democracy, and supporter of the U.S. military presence in Southeast Asia.

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