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Singapore Leader's Vietnam Stand Elicits Echoes

**Other Asian Officials Concur
in Support of U.S. Policy**

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TOKYO, March 28—Premier Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore has expressed a view on Vietnam that is seldom heard in public from other leaders of non-Communist Asia. There have been indications that many agree in private with what the vigorous young Socialist politician said here but withhold a similar open expression because of domestic considerations.

"The stakes [in Vietnam] are very large," Mr. Lee declared while in Japan last week to attend a private seminar of Socialist theoreticians.

"What is happening in Vietnam cannot be repeated," he continued. "We cannot allow the same forces that have emasculated South Vietnam to emasculate the whole region."

Rather than face a continued Communist threat to their national integrity, Mr. Lee said, the sensitive former colonial countries of Southeast Asia "may very well prefer a permanent American military presence."

Judging U. S. Credit

The "credit-worthiness" of the United States, he added, will be judged by Southeast Asians from now on "in the proximity of promise and performance"—in other words, on whether Washington makes good its commitment.

Mr. Lee's statements put forth convictions held by the head of a Southeast Asian Government in the smallest of the countries but one that nevertheless, is a key territory in the region.

The 43-year-old leader recalled that he had helped to fight off forces subservient to Peking that might have turned his strategic island state into "another Cuba" off the coast of Asia.

Mr. Lee has still other credentials as a spokesman for



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Premier Lee Kuan Yew

Southeast Asians. A brilliant young Cambridge-educated lawyer of Chinese ancestry, he professes a neutralist ideology and is at times an astringent critic of the West, particularly the United States.

Among the more experienced leaders of non-Communist Asia,

**But Lee Kuan Yew's View Is
Seldom Heard in Public**

Premier Eisaku Sato of Japan is one whose expressions in private have been close to Prime Minister Lee's open support of the Johnson policy.

Mr. Sato was reported by a qualified American diplomatic source, to have told Arthur J. Goldberg when the United States delegate to the United Nations was here last month that the carrying out of Washington's commitment to the Saigon Government was most important despite adverse public opinion around the world.

But Japanese newspaper accounts, based on official briefings, failed to mention this aspect of Mr. Sato's conversation with Mr. Goldberg. A Japanese Government spokesman dwelled instead, it appeared, on Mr. Sato's routine observation that a peaceful settlement was most desirable.

At the opposite end of the political spectrum in non-Communist Asia, Prince Norodom Sihanouk of neutralist Cambodia has been quoted as having given thanks for the American presence in Southeast Asia, which he often denounces in public.

The outspoken Cambodian Chief of State is reported to have told Australian diplomats, among others, that he is well aware of the salutary effect of the American counterpressure to the Communists adhering to Hanoi and Peking.