



EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

AMBASSADOR

26 January 2025

The New York Times

To the editor:

Your Opinion Video “How Tyranny Begins” (22 January) is essentially a commentary on the current state of US politics. But you draw in Singapore via the misleading analogies provided by Mr Li Shengwu, masquerading as a persecuted dissident.

Mr Li has never been exiled from Singapore, jailed or stripped of his possessions, as might some of the others in your feature. He remains a Singapore citizen and continues to travel freely on a Singapore passport.

Singapore takes the rule of law seriously, and no one including Li is above the law. He was indeed charged for contempt of court in 2020. He has already paid the fine of S\$15,000 (US\$11,000) imposed by the Court. He has not been under investigation for anything else since, and there are no outstanding charges against him. He is free to return to Singapore any time he wishes.

“It is better to fight...,” he says in your video, “rather than to give in and hope that somebody else will be the check and balance for you.”

If he so wishes, he can contest in the next General Elections, which must be held before November this year.

Instead, Mr Li parleys his status as the grandson of Mr Lee Kuan Yew and lends himself to the Times to provide false analogies for US politics. It is deeply regrettable that he has chosen to denigrate the very country his grandfather had a pivotal role building.



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Contrary to the dark picture that you and Mr Li paint, the Singapore that Mr Lee Kuan Yew built ranks 16th on the 2024 Rule of Law Index, well ahead of the US for many years.

The 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index ranked Singapore the 5th least corrupt country in the world – again, well ahead of the US for many years.

It is not for us to comment on US domestic politics. But we must object when you use a false portrayal of Singapore to advance your own agenda.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lui Tuck Yew'.

Lui Tuck Yew

Singapore Ambassador to the United States