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SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT AT THE STATE BANQUET
BY THE PRESIDENT AND MRS. SHEARES IN HONOUR
OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN AND THEIR ROYAL
HIGHNESSES THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH AND THE
PRINCESS ANNE - ISTANA, FRIDAY,
18TH FEBRUARY, 1972

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highnesses,
Your Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen,

It is a rare privilege that has fallen upon me,
to welcome Your Majesty and Your Royal Highnesses to Singapore.
The people and the Government of Singapore are happy that a
British sovereign has come to see what one of Britain's
distinguished sons founded over 153 years ago. There was precious
little then in Singapore -- a small fishing village of 150 persons --
120 Malays and 30 Chinese.

The enterprise of the early traders, British and Asian,
and the hard work of subsequent immigrants, operating within a
framework of honest and fair administration, made Singapore
flourish.

It may well have been that if an Englishman had
not founded Singapore, some other European might have. But
Singapore considers herself fortunate in that, when the time came,
power was handed over with less disruption, and more goodwill,
than was the case in other parts of Southeast Asia.

Your Majesty's visit takes place at a time when momentous changes are taking place. Britain is to join the European Economic Community in January next year. New economic relationships will have to be developed, not just between Britain and Singapore, but between the whole of the Common Market and the various countries of Asia. The bipolar security system of the immediate post-war world will never be quite the same with the growing detente between Western and Eastern Europe, and the thaw between America and China.

But whatever the final dispositions of power and influence, both political and economic, between the super and major powers, Singapore will always value her long association with Britain and the British people. These ties have made it easier for us to adjust ourselves to the realities of power in the last decades of the 20th century.

I do not know what changes the future holds in store for Southeast Asia and for Singapore. But I am glad that Your Majesty and Your Royal Highnesses have been able to come when there are still many of the landmarks of old Singapore, to recall Britain's part in its foundation and its development into the unlikeliest of island cities in the world.

The past is history, which cannot be re-written.
The future is not without promise, and can be mutually rewarding
if the many ties between us are not left to wither away through
want of care and cultivation.

And now, Your Royal Highnesses, Your Excellencies,
ladies and gentlemen, may I ask you to rise and drink with me a
toast to Her Majesty the Queen, Head of the Commonwealth.
