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Subject: (EMBARGOED) Speech by PM Goh Chok Tong at the Key, Medal and Diploma Ceremony in Argentina, 2 June 99

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY SINGAPORE PRIME MINISTER GOH CHOK TONG ON THE OCCASION OF THE KEY, MEDAL AND DIPLOMA CEREMONY IN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA, ON WEDNESDAY 2 JUNE 1999

Honourable Mayor Fernando de la Rúa

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for your kind words and warm welcome. Since arriving in Buenos Aires yesterday, I have been impressed by the beauty and charm of this City of Good Air.

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As I travelled through the streets of Buenos Aires, I could not help but admire the tree-lined boulevards and historical buildings. They give your city an air of elegance and sophistication. The architecture and vibrancy reflect the culture and heritage of your people, as well as your prosperous economy. No wonder Buenos Aires is described by others as the Paris of South America.

Buenos Aires is not only the capital of Argentina, but is also the gateway into both Argentina and Latin America. As an immigrant city, it welcomed people with different cultures from various lands. Its outward orientation and ready absorption of foreign ideas have given this city the unique cosmopolitan flavour.

Buenos Aires and Singapore are similar in several ways. Like Buenos Aires, Singapore has welcomed people from various shores seeking better fortunes. Both our cities have thrived because of the pivotal role played by our sea ports. Both our cities are plugged into the international trading and communications networks. Given these similarities, our two cities should explore areas where we can tap into each other's strengths.

It is my hope that my visit to Argentina will mark a new chapter in relationship between Singapore and Argentina. For too long, we have not capitalised on the possibilities between our countries and regions.

The proposed East Asia-Latin America Forum between Latin America and Asia would bridge the gap in knowledge between our two continents. It would enable us to build up relations in the political, economic, academic and cultural arenas. The East Asian and Latin American countries which have been approached to join the Forum have agreed to do so. I look forward to working closely with Argentina on this important initiative.

Honourable Mayor

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am deeply honoured to be recognised by your fascinating city and its enterprising "portenos".

I came to Buenos Aires to learn more about Argentina and its people. Your gesture of friendship has reinforced my positive and lasting impressions of Buenos Aires.

Thank you.

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