TRANSCRIPT OF A SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT A DINNER OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE, HELD AT THE HOTEL SINGAPURA ON OCTOBER 7, 1966.

There is a tendency in our society -- which I have come more and more to recognise -- to take life seriously even whilst eating, and this makes it very difficult for me because if I am to take myself seriously, let alone take my audience seriously at the end of an eight-course dinner, then life would be very unhappy for me.

So I have asked if I could unburden myself of the little bit of seriousness which I can afford to take of myself, and more important, of you, Mr. President and your fellow-students this evening.

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You have spoken of many serious things, and you have spoken of them in a very serious vein. And I would say that that is one of the qualities which any elite assiduously cultivates: a sense of calculated importance. They take themselves seriously because they know, from the performance of past

generations of students from a particular institution, they have been in the top echelon of leadership in their society.

You have spoken, Mr. President, of the law as if the law qualified its disciples for political leadership.

That was true once upon a time. That was a British-type society in which the Parliamentarian, the man who legislated, had knowledge of the law, and the practice of the law afforded a man the leisure and the finesse which enabled him to lead his society. That is no longer true.

It is true that Nehru was a barrister. It is also true that Tunku Abdul Rahman Putera Al-haj is a barrister; and so am I.

Law means language. Without language -- the instruments of thought -- how do you have the precision of the legislator?

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Law means a committal to a set of values, and those values means politics, and politics is something fundamental, deep in the interstices of an individual and a people.

Law means language; language means politics; politics means a whole background of ideas, values, the kind of life you want your children to have and the kind of society in which you want them to live. This is where you come very near the bone.

You are not going to influence your neighbours, Mr. President, by producing an eminent law school. That is the last thing, if I may say so with humility. It is the last instrument I would suggest we use.

If you want to influence your neighbours, you show them the carrot, and you say, "That way lies gold, the jackpot at the bottom of the rainbow. Multi-lingualism, tolerance, multi-culturalism, a successful economic booster to prosperity".

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You produce a law school, lawyers to prove the guilt of individuals for corruption, for nepotism, for all the stupidities and inadequacies of a political system, and you believe you are going to influence your neighbours to follow you? That is not on.

If you are thinking in terms of being leaders of men in your society, then you must be more contemporary than myself. My generation perhaps, might

have lived in the belief that if we were good lawyers, we would make a good fortune. We would have so much time that one could dabble in the affairs of one's fellow-men. That was true of 19th-century Britain and perhaps. But it is not true today.

There are two types of individuals who emerge in positions of leadership.

If your country is developed, then inevitably, the people who emerge in positions of leadership are people with a very firm grasp of the bolts and nuts of life, of standards of living and the economics of life. And so Mr. Wilson is an economist of some repute, and Mr. Holt of Australia has spent many years as Treasurer or as Finance Minister of Australia. So too, with Chancellor Erhard; so too with Mr. Sato of Japan.

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But as I looked around the conference table at Marlborough House recently, I saw emerging the other kind of leadership -- a new one; not one which I represent, the Tunku and I. I looked at two young colonels present, representing the Governments of Nigeria and Ghana.

And I say to all law students: pray that my successor will be an economist. Then you have a future. If my successor is a young colonel, then

yours is the ignominious role of a mercenary -- literally, a mercenary -- a paid-hack of a prosecutor in some unfortunate tribunal in which the leaders of the previous Government will be in the dock; worse for you, the state-paid hack as Counsel for the defence.

I demand the right -- and I do not care whether the United Nations or its Human Rights guarantee me this, that or the other -- I demand the right, which I think I have and you have, that we should live in peace to be able to develop ourselves to the maximum of our capacity. And any one who sets about to destroy that right, I will resist either quietly and surreptitiously, or overtly and boisterously.

How do we ensure that this society will always offer all its citizens a meaningful, purposeful existence, is what should engage your minds.

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I am not interested in ideas as ideas themselves, however much of an esoteric thrill these can give you by way of intellectual stimulation. I am interested in ideas insofar as they can galvanise both our society -- which means you and I -- in a way which will enable us eventually, to move our neighbours or those of our neighbours who matter to us in the right direction.

And to do that, you need the law; you need the panoply of justice; you need the free-play of ideas. But, most important of all -- never forget this when you complain about banners and lorries and so on -- you need a very strong referee who, in this case, must have a gun because the contestants are often prone to using the gun. And the referee must not only have a gun but must know when judiciously to use it. If he does well, then the pianist will never be shot and you will always here some music!

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