

THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH AT THE
STATE BANQUET IN CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL DAY
AND THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF MODERN
SINGAPORE, HELD AT SINGAPORE CONFERENCE HALL
ON 8TH, AUGUST, 1969

Your Royal Highness, Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is not often that we celebrate such an anniversary, nor one with such distinguished company. We are honoured to have Her Majesty the Queen represented by Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra. We are also happy to have with us the Hon. Angus Ogilvy, the Hon. Malcolm Fraser and Mrs. Fraser, the Hon. Tun Razak and Toh Puan Raha, the Hon. Adams-Schneider and Mrs. Adams-Schneider, the Rt. Hon. Fred. Peart and Mrs. Peart.

145 years ago, five years after he founded Singapore, Stamford Raffles took over four months travelling from Bencoolen to London. But for modern transportation, we would not have had this occasion graced by our distinguished guests.

Change is a companion of life. But in no period of human history have the changes been as spectacular as those in the last 30 years since the Second World War. And it has been going at a geometrically increasing speed, until two men have set foot on the moon.

There are few events in life which are inevitable. However the declared policies of Britain to withdraw from East of Suez, the painful American experience in Vietnam, and their President's pronouncement that there will be no further Vietnam's, these make it likely that there will be momentous changes in Southeast Asia. This makes it all the more necessary, in our mutual interest, to continue co-operation in matters of defence between Malaysia and Singapore. And the statements by the Australian and New Zealand Governments, that they will keep their forces in the Malaysia-Singapore area beyond 1971 have already helped to reinforce confidence. Without confidence economic development is not possible.

The shape of things to come is not pre-destined. They can be altered by many imponderables, and by our own initiatives. What cannot be changed is the past. This evening, we deem ourselves amongst the fortunate few who can afford to be proud of their past, with no desire to rewrite or touch up the truth. It is a

short history, a 150 years, but long enough for us to value our association with the British people.

British naval and maritime supremacy is the golden thread that has brought about the four nations of Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore. With the passing of Empire, British naval supremacy is being displaced as more and more American and Russian naval vessels fill up the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. But this is nothing compared to the debris and litter in the skies from American and Russian space probes.

No one can foresee in what kind of Singapore, or indeed in what sort of world, Singaporeans will celebrate their 200th Anniversary. The chances are there will be no re-assuring presence of a resident British Commander-in-Chief. So we take particular pleasure in having with us tonight the British C-in-C, Far East and his Navy, Army and Air Commanders. Geography may lead us towards closer co-operation with our neighbours in East and Southeast Asia and Oceania.

But on this evening, we may be forgiven a little nostalgia as we give credit to our founder, Sir Stamford Raffles, and to those who came after him. Without them modern Singapore would not have been.

In appreciation of their part in the building of modern Singapore, Your Royal Highness, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I ask you to rise and drink with me, a toast to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

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