SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT A PRIVATE DINNER BY THE PRIME MINISTER & MRS. LEE IN HONOUR OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN AND THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH AND THE PRINCESS ANNE, AT PENTHOUSE NEGARA, SATURDAY, 19TH FEBRUARY, 1972

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highnesses, Ladies & Gentlemen,

There are many things I could tell Your Majesty about Singapore and the British. But it cannot be done in a few minutes. Let me just narrate a conversation I had several years ago with a minister of one of the E.E.C. countries.

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He had just been to Southeast Asia. He said his countrymen used to believe that if they had good comfortable homes, and well-paid jobs, they would be a happy people. They had lost their empire and this seemed a reasonable enough ambition. Now, said he, his people had comfortable homes and good wages to pay for all the things that make life agreeable. But they were not a happy people. It was not simply boredom. It was the absence of adventure.

They, a maritime nation, had always found adventure in travel and enterprise overseas. So he had come back to Southeast Asia to re-forge these links, for economic, and perhaps more important, for psychological considerations.

He remarked, in passing, that he feared his British friends might be making the same mistake. The British, he said, were also coming to believe that a comfortable future was in a cosy Europe.

He was a good raconteur. It is impossible for me to recapture his gestures, his facial expression, the quizzical look in his eyes. They all vividly conveyed to me the disappointment he feared might be in store for those who believed in a purely European formula.

My generation is that of Prince Philip and of Your Majesty. After the Second World War, I knew there were going to be vast changes in the direction and thrust of world power and politics. Looking back, it is easy to see how inevitable some of the trends were, that America would lose her overwhelming economic and military predominance, even though she remained the strongest single power in the world; that the countries of Western Europe would recover their economic strength and acquire renewed purpose in an economically integrated Europe; that Britain had to join Europe a little later and pay a higher

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price as a consequence of missing the opportunity of being a founder member; that Russia and China would inevitably be at odds over their vast border regions; that the patriotic and intense Japanese would turn Japan into the busiest workshop of Asia.

However, looking forward is difficult. It is impossible to chart the twists and turns of super-power politics. Much is uncertain. I must hope that a stronger Europe, with Britain a member, will play a more active role in widening the areas of economic interests of Europe to Asia.

Finally, may I say how happy I am to have Your Majesty and Your Royal Highnesses visit Singapore. Some 25 years ago, as a carefree undergraduate, I joined my fellow students at Cambridge in taking the morning off lectures to celebrate the marriage of the heir to the British throne to the Duke of Edinburgh. It was an auspicious day and good reason for festivity, though somewhat early in the day for "Audit Ale". I did not know that I was to have the great pleasure to ask you, ladies and gentlemen, tonight, in Singapore, to join me in drinking to the good health of Her Majesty, Prince Philip and Princess Anne.

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