

Welcome, everyone.

1. Philip Yeo our 16th S R Nathan Fellow for this year, is *sui generis* — that's Latin for "Philip Yeo, one kind one". It is very difficult to introduce him, so I will tell two stories which I heard from him first, many years ago. He may not remember the stories and the stories are not exactly about him, but rather about his mentor and guru, Dr Goh Keng Swee. However, these stories will tell you a lot about Philip.
2. Both stories took place during his early years in MINDEF, working with Dr Goh. At that time, we had pig farms in Singapore and the pig farms were causing a lot of problems. Singaporeans were complaining about the smell of pigs but they still wanted to eat pork. So, how do we solve this problem?
3. Dr Goh called up Philip Yeo, who was just 25 years old at the time, and said, "Look I have an idea. Why do we get one of these disused supertankers? You know, buy them cheap, put all the pigs on the supertankers, and sail the ship out to the South China Sea."
4. So, he asked Philip Yeo to go and research this idea. So, Philip Yeo did, and a few days later came back and said, "Dr Goh, pigs don't sweat, which is why they roll around in the muck. You put them on a supertanker in the middle of the ocean, they will all die of heatstroke. You will have *char siew* (barbecued pork), but no live pigs." So that was the end of that idea.
5. On another occasion, Dr Goh read a magazine article about krill and how they contain very high protein. He called up Philip again and said, "There's this story about krill and it is very cheap. Actually, fishermen throw krill away when they catch them. Why don't you go and collect all the krill for free? We can use it to feed the army."
6. This time, Philip didn't do enough research. He did as he was told, collected the krill and soon, the army had krill for breakfast, krill for lunch, krill for dinner. In fact, I remember this well because I was in the army at that time in the early 70s and Dr Goh had just returned to Defence from the Ministry of Finance.
7. At the end of one month, Philip went back to Dr Goh and said, "Enough! You're going to have a revolt on your hands." And that was the end of the krill experiment.
8. I share these stories because they illustrate, better than anything else, how our founding fathers were cranks. There is a definition of genius as that "zigzag flash of lightning in the brain". And there is nobody who embodied that more in the political leadership than Dr Goh. And nobody in the civil service who illustrated that more than Philip Yeo.

9. However, not all cranky ideas are accurate or good. So, you need someone like Philip Yeo to tell the politician, "Sir, you're going to get *char siew*, not pigs". At the same time, you need somebody like Philip Yeo to try out these cranky ideas.
10. This weird combination of the ability to speak truth to power and willingness to try out crazy things is what produced the Singapore of today. If you only have people who played it safe and took the predictable way, we would not be where we are now.
11. Now, I have not read the remarks that were prepared for me because it is very difficult to capture Philip Yeo unless you have known him or worked with him — neither of which I have done. But certainly, I am old enough to remember Philip Yeo, the man who played such a huge seminal role in the development of Singapore.
12. I will not summarise what he has to say, except to say that you will hear plenty of evidence of that "zigzag flash of lightning". That's genius.
13. Without much ado, please, Philip.