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Welcome Remarks by Janadas Devan, Director, Institute of Policy Studies

Launch of *Stewardship of the Singapore Media: Staying the Course*

16 May 2023

Minister Josephine Teo,
Professor Danny Quah, Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy,
Patrick, and friends,

Welcome to the launch of *Stewardship of the Singapore Media: Staying the Course*. This book is a collection of Patrick's three IPS-Nathan lectures last year, including the post-lecture discussions.

Patrick is the 11th S R Nathan Fellow, and this is the 11th book in the series. There was a book before this by Noeleen Heyzer, on Singapore and multilateral governance, but Noeleen was appointed fortunately and unfortunately as UN special envoy of the Secretary General to Myanmar, and therefore we weren't able to launch her book. And the next book after this — [with] the next Fellow after Patrick, [who] was the 12th Fellow, Professor Wang Gungwu — his book will be launched soon, titled *Living With Civilisations: Reflections on Southeast Asia's Local and National Cultures*.

I am happy to announce that we have lined up our next three S R Nathan Fellows. Next semester, for the 2023/24 Academic Year, we have Professor Joseph Liow, Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at Nanyang Technological University. He will speak on the current global geopolitical tensions, especially US-China relations, and how we might position ourselves in this landscape.

Tan Chong Meng, CEO of PSA International, is next. He will deliver his lectures on the changing economic landscape and its effect on international trade. Of course, this is of great concern to us. He will be our Fellow in the second semester of the 2023/24 Academic Year. That is from January next year.

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Professor Lily Kong, President of Singapore Management University, will deliver her series of lectures in the first semester of Academic Year 2024/25. She will be speaking on the idea of university in Singapore.

Patrick's lectures were on the media, and I dare say he had a much more difficult time delivering his lectures than Noeleen Heyzer on multilateralism, about which you can't disagree. And the Wang Gungwu one — lecturing about hundreds of years of civilisation, or thousands of years, where you can't possibly be contradicted — and they were very interesting lectures. But Patrick unfortunately had to talk about the evolving media landscape, and there is never a good time to speak about that. His focus was on legacy media, referring to mass media like print newspapers that dominated prior to the Information Age. He took a historical look at the media today, and covered how our legacy media should adapt to new trends. He delivered the lectures while the Singapore Press Holdings was in the midst of a restructuring its business model, which was no easy feat. I'm referring to the lectures in that period, not the restructuring itself, which was of course an ongoing exercise. I won't say more on this, and I'll leave it to my boss to say more, if she wishes.

Patrick and I were colleagues at SPH. He was my boss actually, for a long time, both as managing editor, and later as Editor-in-Chief. We had a very good working relationship, and we became friends. I should say this about him — I've never had an editor more skilled than him. I saw him edit copy, and it was really instructive. It was something I couldn't do. He just took a few words here and there, and improved the copy, while leaving the voice of the writer intact. I could never do that. I tended to edit people and they all sounded like me, which as you might guess, was not pleasant. And I learnt a lot from him as an editor. People don't understand this, but it is actually a very difficult job running any media company enterprise in Singapore. There are lots of stakeholders that you have to manage, and you not only need to be a very astute editor, but also a very able diplomat. And to keep so many people at least pacified so that the operation can go on is no easy feat. I will leave him to decide, or describe, what he had to do, if he wishes, again, and I will now turn over the floor to my boss, Minister Josephine Teo, who will have much more to say than I do. Thank you very much.