SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. LEE KUAN YEW,
AT THE STATE DINNER IN HIS HONOUR GIVEN BY THE
HEAD OF STATE OF CAMBODIA, SAMDECH NORODOM
SIHANOUK, IN PHNOM PENH ON DECEMBER 7TH, 1967.

Your Royal Highness,

Once again I am indebted to you for a memorable week in Cambodia. Your generosity in words and deeds was surpassed only by the graciousness with which it was proffered.

I brought my family to Cambodia to broaden their education. The ruins at Angkor are silent witness to the glories of a great civilisation the Khmers sustained for 800 years from the 7th to the 15th century. But they underline a cruel truth, that no one can take for granted their peace, security and continued prosperity.

While I rested in Phnom Penh, my more energetic children went around and described to me the things they saw -- the new shops, new offices, new schools, the Sangkum University, the National Theatre, National Assembly and the Sports Stadium. At the Sangkum Exhibition, they had a glimpse of the wider
achievements beyond Phnom Penh in the rest of Cambodia. They will also remember what they were told that the Exhibition building was founded on newly reclaimed land.

Having visited Angkor, their impressions of Phnom Penh became the more vivid. The new Phnom Penh they saw had the architectural style, in steel and concrete, of what Angkor had in sandstone and laterite.

I leave conscious that it is not just Angkor that a visitor must see. For the buildings in Phnom Penh, although the more functional, are no less monuments to Khmer creativity. It was a lesson of what is possible, given a united people, led by a patriot of great verve and vitality. And its future has been made more secure by a policy which is as consistent as it is sincere. Throughout all the changes of circumstance in the world, your non-aligned policy has never altered its fundamental principles, that the destiny of Cambodia and the Khmers is your paramount consideration.

When I arrived I mentioned how despite the very different histories of our two peoples, they find themselves in not altogether dissimilar situations. We both have neighbours, who are larger in population, and bigger in area. Up to
recently, both the peoples suffered turbulence. For Singapore, fortunately, some changes have recently occurred.

I read with interest, whilst in Siem Reap, that the Indonesian Parliament (MPRS) had formally rescinded "Guided Democracy" as their state philosophy. So "confrontation", which was a manifestation of this "Guided Democracy", is ceremoniously and I hope permanently written off. Now I have a peaceful neighbour to my north, and a peace-loving neighbour to my south. I have seen many reports that they now seek the implements of peace to rebuild their country. May all of us in Southeast Asia spend most of our time building up our economies and creating the better life, which all our peoples desire.

It is in this spirit that Singapore joined the Asian Bank and ASEAN. We know that sometimes the proclamations made at a given moment in history are not subsequently supported by successor regime of the parties to the contract. Hence the value of Angkor: a reminder of what can happen.

A thought struck me whilst meandering through the ruins. You have a great tradition from a magnificent past. The monuments, which have weathered the centuries, are still inspiring your people to greater endeavour. They give your
people confidence that under your able leadership, they have it in them to achieve what their forbears had done.

Singapore had no such reassurance in ancient ruins. Nevertheless two million of us, perhaps amongst the better cared for in Asia, have no intention of allowing our strenuous and sustained effort put into the re-building of modern Singapore to come to nought.

We in Singapore are all of migrant stock. None can trace their family connections with Singapore beyond 1819. But because we have emigrated and left behind what was culturally a richer and more secure past in China, India, Indonesia, and Europe (for we have thousands of Eurasians and European citizens), we are all determined to make good: so that the long journey to the Southseas should be worthwhile.

Incidentally, I cannot tell you how grateful I was, that my forbears decided to sail a thousand miles further south, beyond the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, I noticed that some of your officials who greeted me wore badges. I was startled. But I was pleasantly relieved on closer scrutiny to find that they bore your likeness.
The greater distance that fortuitously my forbears had travelled has made it possible for the present for me not to have to compete with the thoughts of others in Asia.

And I am cheered by the prospect that in 15, or even 10 years time, a new generation, the generation of my children, growing up not monolingual, but multilingual, will provide those who succeed me in office with a political base which will be impervious to chauvinist pulls, either through ethnic or cultural sentiments. The next generations educated in the languages and cultures, not of one, but at least two civilisations, will acquire the sophistication that comes out from being able to compare and contrast different but equally great civilisations.

Finally, may I say how much I valued our discussions. There can be no conceivable conflict of interests between Cambodia and Singapore. Perhaps the felicitous coincidence in names between the lion city of "Singapura" and the lion city of "Sihanoukville" holds out the promise of ever growing and fruitful relations. The personal bonds between us have grown into friendly and fraternal ties between our two governments. I am sure they will bear fruit in trade and commerce for mutual advantage.
Tourism, according to the Khmer News Agency, was a subject we discussed. May I say that Singapore has found tourism not only valuable for economic or foreign exchange reasons. We actively encourage all visitors, Americans, Australians, Germans, Japanese and others, to also visit our neighbours. For then, whether they are foreign correspondents seeking a story, or business executives seeking more sales, or ordinary men and women seeking diversion, they will not fail to note the nuances between economic and non-economic user of the human and natural resources of each country. And they are soon disabused of the easy attractions of what has been cynically called the "numbers game".

To conclude, I can give you no better tribute than what my children said to me after the motor tour through Phnom Penh last Sunday. They told me they were deafened by the cheers and applause for you. This acclamation was spontaneous, from a people who loved and had reasons to love their leader. More foreign journalists, more opinion formulators, and more tourists should share this experience. They can then the better compare and contrast a popular Government headed by a well-loved patriot with perilously unstable regimes elsewhere where the leaders' only right to obedience is the bayonet. US$27 billion is being spent every year in order that eventually a South Vietnam Government could emerge that would not need to use the bayonet. Then let us
hope they can democratically decide their own future. Perhaps there is something valuable people can learn from present day Cambodia.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, may I ask you to rise and join me in a toast to the good health and long life of the Queen, to the Head of State and Princess Sihanouk, to the eternal glory of the new Cambodia which the Khmers are building under his leadership.