

TOAST BY PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW AT THE DINNER
HOSTED BY PRESIDENT AND MRS REAGAN ON 8 OCT 85 AT THE
WHITE HOUSE

My wife and I are honoured and delighted to be here with you and to enjoy your warm hospitality.

We would like to express our special thanks to Mrs Reagan for we learned of her personal interest in the preparations for this splendid dinner. It is a rare and gracious First Lady who would personally settle and approve the menu, wines, the floral arrangements and the entertainment. I have read of Mrs Reagan in her campaign against drug abuse. Her personal efforts and her attention to the details of the cause have won her wide acclaim. I watched her on TV standing amidst the rubble of Mexico City a few days after the recent earthquake, bringing succour and support to the victims. After nearly five years in the White House the latest opinion poll puts her approval rating at 71 per cent, ahead of the President's by nine per cent points! Mr President, your staff has to shape up, or you may have to borrow the First Lady's.

Mr President, I have been a regular visitor to the United States for two decades. It was an ordeal to watch American writhe in self-inflicted agony at home during the years she tried to fight the war in Vietnam. Even after the war she did not bounce back from her depression. And morale dropped to a new low when American hostages were held in Teheran.

When you were taking your oath of office as President, the hostages were released. It was proof to me that the Iranian mullahs were not as crazy as the media had made them out to be. You made your fellow Americans and your friends again feel proud and optimistic by the confidence you radiated.

You have never allowed any problem, however daunting, to weigh you down. Now as imports surge into America because of an over-strong dollar, Congress in its pessimism moves towards protectionism. You have not yielded to such despair. You will astound your critics yet again when you turn this spell of apparent adversity to advantage by opening up foreign markets and creating new jobs for Americans.

The Reagan years will surely be a noticeable landmark in American history. You have restored American leadership in the maintenance of a just and equitable world order.

Mr President, I have been privileged to share some of your thoughts today. The friendly relations between the United States and Singapore are at their best. This is as they should always be.

Mr President, may I now propose a toast to you and the First Lady, to your health and happiness, and to the continuing prosperity of the United States of America.

M1/PM/Pgs.1-2

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