

SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW
AT THE DINNER HOSTED BY THE BURMESE
PRIME MINISTER ON 16 JAN 86 IN RANGOON

Thank you for your warm welcome to my delegation, my wife and me. I am honoured to be in Burma once again and to enjoy the generous hospitality of you and your Government.

My first visit to Rangoon was in April 1962, when I got to know General Ne Win. Our friendship has grown in these last two-and-a-half decades. Burma-Singapore relations have been close and friendly. No problems have disrupted the even tenor of our relations.

After their independence, Burma and Singapore have taken different routes towards their perceived futures. Burma opted for self-reliance, with selected external ties. Singapore had to plug into the world's network of trade and investment flows which is determined by the free market economics of the industrial nations. We have had very different experiences. However, we still share some common approaches or attitudes to the problems of the contemporary world. So there can be advantage in sharing our experiences.

We have both sought to create stable and peaceful environments around us through non-involvement in big-power or regional conflicts that do not directly affect us. Burma has succeeded admirably in this. Although she shares borders with China, India, Thailand, Laos and Bangladesh, Burma has good relations with all of them. She has kept out of most regional conflicts.

Singapore is a member of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, her primary commitment is to harmonious relations and close cooperation with her neighbours in ASEAN. It is cooperation in ASEAN which has minimised regional difficulties and enhanced peace and stability in the region. One threat to the region is the Vietnamese invasion and occupation of Cambodia. In the past seven years, ASEAN has sought a political solution which will restore sovereignty and independence to the Cambodian people. Southeast Asia can become a more peaceful and secure region for all when UN resolutions on Cambodia are eventually accepted and all foreign forces are withdrawn to allow self-determination for the Cambodian people through free elections.

Now, may I ask you to join me in a toast to the good health of His Excellency U Ne Win, His Excellency President U San Yu and His Excellency Prime Minister U Maung Maung Kha, and to the well-being of the people of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma.

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