

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

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TO CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

REPLY SPEECH BY H.E. MR. VO VAN KIET
CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
AT THE DINNER GIVEN IN HIS HONOUR BY H.E. MR. GOH CHOK TONG
PRIME MINISTER OF SINGAPORE

Your Excellency Mr. Prime Minister and Madame,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear friends,

It has long been my wish to have an opportunity to visit your beautiful country, a country that is young compared with the development history of a nation but known the world over for her prosperity. Today, my wish has come true. Here, I witness not only Singapore's economic and social achievements but also the Singaporean people's hospitality. Therefore, first of all, allow me to express my profound gratitude to the Government and people of Singapore for their warm welcome and to H.E. Mr. Prime Minister for his compliments on our country and the cooperation between Vietnam and Singapore.

We greatly rejoice at the achievements recorded by Singapore and see that greater prospects are awaiting it. We sincerely wish you greater successes in the cause of national development, new development rate records and prosperity. Singapore's prosperity will contribute to that of the region.

Singapore's path of development has drawn the attention of many countries in the region. Vietnam wishes to exchange opinion with Singapore on the latter's development experience. Could the experiences be those of a country which, though not big in size, has exploited creatively its advantages in national development. Over the past many years, Vietnam has carried out a renovation and has gained important achievements. We have determined ourselves to go along that correct path. In order to further our renovation, we advocate bringing into play our own resources, at the same time, strengthening cooperation with all countries, especially those in Southeast Asia.

More than a year ago, I had the honour to meet and exchange opinions with H.E. Mr. Lee Kwan Yew in Davos (Switzerland). The meeting has left good impression on me and what we discussed at the time has now been materialized.

Vietnam and Singapore are two close neighbours. International and regional environment creates favourable conditions for the two countries to develop their bilateral friendship and cooperation. Our two countries have enormous potentials for cooperation that should be exploited for their respective prosperity, for regional peace and development. H.E. Mr. Prime Minister once said that "a challenge to the ASEAN countries in the 90's is how to help the Indochinese countries develop". I would like to add that the great interests of the ASEAN and Indochinese countries in the 90's are served by cooperating with one another for development. We are confident that the friendship and cooperation between Vietnam and Singapore will make positive contribution to peace, stability, friendship and cooperation in Southeast Asia. Vietnam is prepared to build, together with Singapore and other Southeast Asian countries, a new order along that line in this region. Vietnam welcomes Singapore's initiatives aimed at contributing to enhancing regional cooperation. On its part, Vietnam is prepared to participate in the regional cooperation on the basis of the principles of relationship provided for by the Bali Treaty.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are looking forward to the upcoming exchanges of views with H.E. Mr. Prime Minister and other leaders of Singapore. I believe that with understanding, trust and friendly feelings, these exchanges of views will yield good results.

In conclusion, may I invite you to join me in a toast to:

- The health and happiness of H.E. Mr. Prime Minister and Madame!
- The prosperity of the people of Singapore!
- The ever-increasing development of the friendship between Vietnam and Singapore.
- The health of all present here tonight.