

TOAST PROPOSED BY SAMDECH NORODOM SIHANOUK,
HEAD OF STATE, AT THE BANQUET IN HONOUR OF
HIS EXCELLENCY LEE KUAN YEW, PRIME MINISTER
OF SINGAPORE, AT PHNOM PENH ON 7TH DECEMBER,
1967.

Mr. Prime Minister,

Madam,

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

I am very happy to welcome here this evening, on the conclusion of their
visit of our Country, His Excellency the Prime Minister of Singapore and Mrs.

Lee Kuan Yew, together with those eminent personages who accompany them.

This visit -- and I should like to draw special attention to this fact -- has not only
proved most successful, but it has likewise opened a new chapter in the history of
Khmero-Singaporean relations.

We have hailed in you -- Mr. Prime Minister -- as Asian leader enjoying
popular support, and a sincere friend of Cambodia. We will never forget that you

came to visit us at a juncture when the threats to our independence were becoming more clearly defined, and provided us with encouragement. In our Afro-Asian world, it is fairly rare to find leaders -- to speak frankly -- who have the courage to rally boldly to the support of a brother-country, condemned out of hand by great imperialist powers. Each day which passes furnishes Cambodia with further evidence of this sad fact.

On your arrival at Pochentong, you expressed -- Mr. Prime Minister -- the opinion that your children would be well advised to meditate upon the downfall of our former Capital, witness to past glories, and upon the fate of a people which ceases to maintain its vigilance. Following the recovery of national independence, however, the Khmer people -- as you will have been able to note in the course of your travels -- is in the process of being born again. In this connection, I should like to express our profound gratitude for the encouragement you have given a Cambodia which is engaged in equipping itself. Your appraisal of the progress we have been making -- Mr. Prime Minister -- has proved of the greatest assistance to us, not only on account of the sincerity of the opinion expressed but, also, in view of the fact that these are based on personal experience in this field. Indeed, the difficulties encountered -- difficulties which tend to become more acute in the case, such as ours, where neocolonialist interests are likely to be adversely affected -- by countries engaged in developing

their resources, are no new phenomenon to you, who have personally confronted, and triumphed over them.

Moreover, the ultra-wealthy imperialists, and those who follow their lead, are seeking to overwhelm us with expressions of their scorn, and term us a tiny, backward country. We are poor -- that is true enough -- but we accept poverty rather than consent to the sacrifice of our national dignity and independence, which would represent the price of opulence. Other countries, more lavishly endowed by nature than is Cambodia's case, have opted otherwise, and agreed to place themselves and their resources unreservedly at the disposal of great powers. But we -- for our part -- are ready to confront any country you may care to name, which is at similar stage of development, for the purpose of comparing with theirs our achievements, due to the labour of, and the sacrifices consented to by, our people.

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We are aware, of course, that the imperialists, as is the case with certain Asian renegades, are uneasy at the consequences likely to result from what they describe as "the bad example set by Cambodia". Moreover, there are grounds for such uneasiness, as were other non-Communist countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America to follow our example, imperialism, neocolonialism, together with the bellicose policies of the United States and their associates, would soon be

nothing more than an unpleasant memory. But it is our enemies good fortune -- as it is the misfortune of mankind -- that no decisive movement on a world-scale seems likely to develop in favour of those whose desire it is to enjoy effective liberty or -- in other words -- to be free from all subservience to great powers, and to those endowed with a superfluity of riches. This mean-spirited refusal to take action is illustrated in lamentable fashion in the affair of Vietnam.

Here, it is not only considered licit that the United States, and their mercenaries, should come to this country for the purpose of destroying it utterly, and of assassinating its people in the name of democracy, and christianity, but complaisance is pushed so far that the belief is professed that a people, engaged in defending its right to enjoy national independence, and the right to settle its own affairs, are the aggressors! That the majority of the Vietnamese people should prefer Mr. Ho Chi Minh's and Mr. Nguyen Huu Tho's regime respectively to that of Saigon, which is rotted by corrupt practice, and pursues a policy of subservience to the intruders, appears to be merely the exercise of an inalienable right.

What would be the reaction -- I ask you -- were the Soviet Union to occupy Thailand, or to obliterate this country under a deluge of bombs with the

objective of compelling its people to abolish the Monarchy, and to abandon its pro-American policy? And what would be the fate of this world of ours were great powers to arrogate to themselves the right -- following the example set by the United States -- to intervene, whenever they felt so inclined, in the most savage fashion in the affairs of other countries for the purpose of imposing a regime of their own choosing? Now the United States and their "allies" are engaged in trampling under foot not only the provisions contained in the Geneva Agreements of 1954, the Charter of the United Nations and international law itself for the purpose of preventing the Vietnamese from exercising their undoubted rights, including that of insisting on the territorial reunification of their fatherland in conformity with the provisions to that end made at "Geneva" in 1956.

Cambodia, for its part, is guilty of no crime other than that of proclaiming Vietnam's right to forge its own destiny, and its own right to remain true to itself. No Vietcong, no Vietminh and no "Sihanoukist" has ever gone to the United States, bent on spreading terror among the inhabitants. Why is it then that Vietnam and Cambodia -- and they alone -- should be doomed to extinction under a rain of American bombs?

The United States is described as "the greatest military and economic power in the world today." But this super-power has not succeeded, and will never succeed in overcoming the resistance of the National Liberation Front, nor that of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. This provides proof enough that, when a numerically small people resolves not to yield to violence employed in an unjust cause, it is invincible. Other peoples, which go to make up the third world, are at liberty to draw, or to refrain from drawing what lessons they like from the resistance offered by the Vietnamese nation to aggression. But the Khmer people, for their part, are drawing, and will continue to draw, inspiration from their resolve to fight on, without thought of coming to terms, in order to ensure that their fatherland survives with its national independence untrammelled, and its territorial integrity respected.

May we assure you -- Mr. Prime Minister -- of the heartfelt gratitude we feel for the understanding you have shown, and for the brotherly support you have given us in regard to this attitude we have adopted, and may we assure you that you can count -- in your turn -- upon our brotherly support in implementing your policy designed to ensure the independence of the State of Singapore.

Your visit will have proved extremely fruitful, and our talks have prepared the way for the growth of closer economic, commercial and cultural links

between our respective States. Indeed, ever since the foundation of Singapore, our two economies have been -- in some sort -- complementary with the result that exchanges of agricultural, and industrial products are unquestionably destined to increase to rapid fashion in the course of the coming years. I am personally of the opinion that a useful purpose would be served were we to furnish an example, deserving of study, from this day forth in regard to the fashion in which relations between two South-East Asian States should be conducted and promoted.

We have faith likewise in the possibilities opened up by co-operation in a wider field between all the countries which go to make up our region of the world. Unfortunately, Western imperialist powers, with some Asian support -- sad to say -- are planning to exploit to their personal profit and advantage the sort of co-operation which I have in mind, and to use it as an instrument of political domination. Cambodia, for its part, could never connive in any such arrangements, and would never agree to join any organisation calculated in any way to circumscribe the untrammelled independence it at present enjoys. We consider it to be more in conformity with the national interest, therefore, to restrict our participation to bilateral co-operation with such countries as may -- with no ulterior motives in view -- propose arrangements of this sort. It is our intention to maintain this policy until such time as it becomes possible to set up

regional organisations of this type, the membership of which is restricted to Asian countries -- with the resultant exclusion of all outside influence, all of which are invested with effective, and not fictitious independence.

At the present time, that co-operation which has become essential between all countries in this part of the world remains blocked by the desire to impose its hegemony displayed by the United States and -- more specifically -- by the criminal hostilities in which its armed forces are engaged in Vietnam, which have brought in their train repercussions in the form of the military occupation of Thailand, and a part of Laos by American military forces. But, whatever trials may still be before us, we are persuaded that -- in maybe one, or in maybe ten years time -- all peoples in South-East Asia will regain their independence, and will find themselves free to work together for the purpose of promoting the prosperity of all.

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Finally, may I assure you -- Mr. Prime Minister -- of the great joy we have derived from the presence of Mrs. Lee Kuan Yew and your children in our midst. Their presence has invested this visit with an intimate, and personal atmosphere, which reflects more accurately the spirit of the relations between our respective States.

May I likewise thank you -- Madam -- for the sentiments of friendship you have displayed towards my Country, expressed in the most delicate fashion.

May I assure you that all Khmer women have taken you to their hearts, and are full of your praises, while your simplicity of manner has conquered the heart of a Nation.

And it is with these sentiments in mind that I propose to raise my glass in the following toast:

To the health of His Excellency Mr. YUSOF BIN ISHAK, President of the Republic of Singapore.

To the health of His Excellency the Prime Minister and Mrs. Lee Kuan Yew and their children,

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To the health of the eminent personages composing the Delegation from the State of Singapore.

To the greatness of the Republic of Singapore, and to the prosperity of its people,

To eternal friendship between our two States.

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