

SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL EDUCATION,  
MR. VANN MOLYVANN, AT THE SPECIAL CONVOCATION  
OF THE ROYAL UNIVERSITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF  
CONFERRING THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF LAW  
(HONORIS CAUSA) UPON THE PRIME MINISTER OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE, HIS EXCELLENCY  
MR. LEE KUAN YEW ON 8TH DECEMBER, 1967.

Your Royal Highness,

Your Excellencies,

Professors, Tutors and Lecturers of this University,

Dear Friends,

Today, we are assembled in solemn conclave for the purpose of conferring  
upon the Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore, His Excellency Mr. Lee  
Kuan Yew, the degree of Doctor of law (honoris causa) of the Royal University.

By so doing, we are paying a most sincere, and well-merited tribute to a  
personage who is not only an eminent statesman, and a distinguished jurist, but is  
likewise - if I may be permitted to say so -- a great friend of Cambodia.

His Excellency Mr. Lee Kuan Yew was one of the most brilliant law-students of his year at Cambridge University, and was assured, therefore, of an outstandingly successful career either at the Bar, or in the academic world either in Singapore, or in any other city, or university-centre of the English-speaking world for that matter. But the practice of the law was to prove too limited and arid a field for such a dynamic personality, passionately interested in political, economic and social problems. Moreover, restricted activities of such a sort were precluded in the estimation of such a man by the fact that the great City, founded by Sir Stamford Raffles, could not remain fossilized in the Victorian age during a tumultuous period in the history of Asia.

Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, strong in his socialist convictions, founded, therefore, in 1955 the "People's Action Party", and proceeded to assail with a success, which need not be recapitulated here, archaic feudal conceptions, and those entrenched feudal interests, allied with the comprador class, which were in effective control of Singapore's administrative machinery. It should perhaps be stressed that the meteoric rise of this new political party, which was to enable its young leader to assume responsibility for the Government of Singapore, occurred in strict conformity with established democratic practices: a fairly rare phenomenon in an age of military

dictatorships, which have either imposed themselves, or been imposed by the imperialists upon peoples, stripped in this fashion of all their rights.

In contrast to such dictators, we consider His Excellency Mr. Lee Kuan Yew to be, therefore, the authentic representative of the dynamic, and enterprising population of Singapore, which is already indebted to him for a number of remarkable achievements in the industrial sphere, in that of public education, social services and town-planning, which are the more to be admired in view of the fact that the youthful Republic is in a very vulnerable position, and is called upon to frustrate imperialist powers with insatiable appetites. Nonetheless-- despite difficulties which are not of its making-- Singapore is making gallant efforts to safeguard its independence, and to assure its future. For our part, we will never forget that its Government was among the first to furnish us with a declaration to the effect that it recognized Cambodia's frontiers as at present established, which is in marked contrast to the attitude of certain other great countries in Asia and elsewhere, which elected to defer to the injunctions of the United States, and of their expansionist "allies" in Saigon and Bangkok in regard to this matter.

Mr. Prime Minister,

Your Excellencies,

Professors, Tutors and Lecturers of this University,

Dear Friends,

I am of the opinion, therefore, that the present ceremony, which exalts Khmero-Singaporean friendship, should likewise be the occasion for reaffirming our shared belief in the sanctity of international law. Of course, I am aware that the events for which this South-East Asia of our serves as the theatre, do not seem to justify such an expression of confidence. But the action of the leading Western power in opting for the law of the jungle is not a valid reason for us to despair of the future.

Indeed, the American Government no longer hesitates to proclaim that it considers itself to be not only above international law but, also, to be no longer bound by the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. There have been few instances in history of a country thus asserting in this cynical fashion that might is right. Furthermore, we have learnt that Generals in the Pentagon, encouraged to take such action by a press, which appears to have taken leave of its senses, have been drawing up plans for a military operation against Cambodia, and for the blockade of the port of Sihanoukville, together with a veto on freedom of navigation by foreign shipping bound for our country, etc... Thus, treaties and agreements become mere scraps of paper, while we- for our part-

have no remedy at law to constrain the United States to honour those undertakings they have freely subscribed to.

Finally, Cambodia is in danger of becoming --after Vietnam, where the Americans are committed to a policy of genocide, recently condemned by Western jurists-- the next Victim of the American aggressors, and of being subjected to wholesale material destruction, and to the massacre of the civilian population. For as you are aware, American arsenals are today equipped with weapons capable of affecting the complete extermination of the population in any given locality: weapons which were expressly renounced by the signatories of the Geneva Agreements, but which are being openly employed nonetheless against the Vietnamese people today.

But we are resolve --as Samdech, Head of State, has proclaimed on a number of occasions-- to resist aggression in any, and every form by force of arms; and in so doing, we will be defending not only our national independence but, also, the pre-eminence of international law over the law of the jungle. In the second world- war, the United States were engaged in defending "the rule of law, democracy and civilization itself" Today, we realize fully well, however, that this task has devolved upon us in our struggle against American imperialism; and,

strong in the knowledge that our cause is a righteous one, we are certain that it will prevail.

In the tribulations and trials with which Cambodia, and all states in South-East Asia are at present threatened, there will be at least some voices raised to plead the case for a return to the reign of international law; and , amid these voices that of His Excellency Mr. Lee Kuan Yew will certainly be clearly audible.

Mr. Prime Minister,

In the name, and on behalf of the Royal University, I now have the honour to confer upon you the Degree of Doctor of Law (Honoris Causa).

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