

ADDRESS OF H.E. FIELD MARSHAL THANOM KITTIKACHORN,
PRIME MINISTER OF THAILAND AT THE BANQUET GIVEN IN
HONOUR OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER OF
SINGAPORE AND MADAM LEE KUAN YEW AT THE
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, 8TH JANUARY, 1973.

Mr. Prime Minister and Madam Lee Kuan Yew,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege and a great honour for me to have this opportunity to act as host to His Excellency the Prime Minister of Singapore and Madam Lee Kuan Yew tonight. On behalf of the Government and the people of Thailand as well as of my own, I would like to extend to both of you our warm and cordial welcome.

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I would like to say how very pleased we are to have you in our midst, since it is the first official visit to Thailand by a Prime Minister of Singapore and especially in the person of Your Excellency whose statemanship is well-known throughout the world. Historically, Thailand and Singapore are not only close neighbours but the people of both countries have also been in constant contact

and have developed a firm friendship and understanding through our common interest, trade and mutual cooperation for hundreds of years.

It may be recalled that Singapore was the very first foreign land to be visited by a Thai Monarch when H.M. King Rama V visited Singapore in 1871. As far as we are concerned, Mr. Prime Minister, Singapore is our old friend and it is our belief that old friends are the best of friends. We are proud of the long standing friendship which has served to enhance the present-day cooperation between Thailand and Singapore.

It may be noted, Mr. Prime Minister, that, under your able guidance and leadership, Singapore has made a great stride forward towards greater prosperity and welfare of her people. No longer is Singapore today known as a mere trading centre but a strong and vigorous nation with a modern seaport which is the fourth largest in the world. Her fast rate of economic growth has won for her an international acclaim and has placed Singapore among the leading nations in Asia. Singapore's achievement serves to demonstrate what a small developing country can accomplish through dedication and diligence of the people coupled with inspired leadership and management. As a trading partner of Singapore, we expect that our present trade and economic relations can be expanded for mutual benefit.

Mr. Prime Minister, we in Thailand are also seriously engaged in the task of national economic development for the betterment of our people. We both are convinced of the merit of regional cooperation as one of the means to attain our goals and objectives. In this regard, it is particularly gratifying that Singapore and Thailand, along with three of our Southeast Asian neighbours, are founding members of ASEAN. Your Excellency will agree with me that ASEAN has come a long way and the direction which ASEAN is evolving is a source of satisfaction to all member nations. From a regional grouping, formed for the purpose of cooperation in the economic, cultural and social fields, the scope of cooperation among ASEAN member countries has further broadened. It is also significant that ASEAN has provided a framework within which member countries can and do strengthen their bilateral cooperation in various fields. As for Singapore and Thailand, recent experiences have proved very encouraging and augur well for the future.

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It is my belief that recent changes on the international scene have made it all the more imperative for nations in Southeast Asia to realize that peace and stability for each and every one of them is a matter not only for individual but also for regional concern and responsibility. For this reason Thailand has always given full support to the practice of periodic informal consultations in order to

enhance cooperation among the ASEAN countries and to provided a forum in which they could co-ordinate their efforts in safeguarding the interest of the region as a whole.

I am quite sure that the cooperative approach among nations in Southeast Asia will be the most constructive means to meet the challenges facing the countries of this region.

It is our hope that the spirit of goodwill and understanding which have been the essence of our long and friendly relations will be our guide for all our mutual activities.

May I ask you all to raise your glasses and drink to the health and future success and prosperity of His Excellency the Prime Minister of Singapore and Madam Lee Kuan Yew and will you all join me in wishing them both a very happy and prosperous New Year.
