

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. DZEMAL BIJEDIC,
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE
SOCIALIST FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA, AT A DINNER
GIVEN IN HIS HONOUR BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. LEE KUAN
YEW, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE, ON
SATURDAY, 17TH MARCH, 1973.

I should like to thank you very much indeed on behalf of my associates, my wife and myself, for the cordial welcome, the sincere and friendly words addressed to us and the hospitality you have shown us since the moment of our arrival here.

We remember your visit to Yugoslavia in late 1971. Then, in a friendly and cordial atmosphere, we conducted a comprehensive exchange of views on the international problems of that period and on ways of promoting bilateral co-operation.

We are extremely happy to be with you again, this time in Singapore. We have already heard of its achievements and beauty and now have the opportunity to see them for ourselves.

It gives us satisfaction to note, as we have done on previous occasions, that thanks to our identical or similar views, we have been able to co-operate very closely and usefully in the United Nations, during UNCTAD sessions, at non-aligned gatherings and at various international meetings convened with the objective of safeguarding peace, solving the economic problems of developing countries and promoting the international co-operation in general.

Some results have been achieved in our own economic co-operation although the open nature of our markets and the dynamic economic growth of our two countries offer far greater possibilities for strengthening and developing our economic relations to the mutual benefit. I assure you that we will not spare efforts towards this end.

Mr. Prime Minister, during your visit to Yugoslavia, together we took note of the fact that certain changes were occurring in the structure of international relations and that positive tendencies had been initiated in terms of a relaxation of international tension and abandonment of cold war methods. Furthermore, a process of negotiation and peaceful settlement of controversies has been instituted. Recently we have witnessed important positive trends which characterize the negotiations and the endeavours being made to solve some of the major international problems. Together with other countries, we welcome the

efforts of the great powers to engage in a running dialogue among themselves as this certainly serves to improve their mutual relations and to solve conflict situations more quickly, all in the interests of world peace. At the same time, however, we staunchly uphold participation on a footing of equality by all the other countries which are deeply concerned that peace, independence and security be guaranteed equally for all in the present era of negotiation in international relations. We feel that the non-aligned countries can significantly contribute to the consistent implementation of the principle of peaceful coexistence.

Together with all peaceminded forces in the world, we acclaimed the achievement of the agreement of peace in Vietnam which has brought relief to all of us and, of course, above all to the people of Vietnam. This is an important event in terms of creating a more favourable atmosphere in the world. We sincerely hope that the consistent implementation of this significant document will enable courageous Vietnamese nation to decide its fate itself and simultaneously mark the beginning of peace and co-operation throughout the entire area of Indo-China and Southeast Asia. We feel that the idea of neutralizing the Southeast Asian region, also supported by your country, is a useful one which we sincerely uphold. It is our belief that the achievement of a

stable peace in that part of the world would wield a positive influence in the sense of facilitating the solution of crises in other parts of the world.

Mr. Prime Minister, as a European country, Yugoslavia is taking part in the dynamic and positive processes that are under way on our continent and is making her contribution to the consolidation of peace, security and more comprehensive co-operation in the region to which she belongs. We are hopeful that the Conference on European Security will give impulse to the present positive processes and establish such principles and practices for future relations in Europe as will take equal account of the interests of all European states. It is in this direction that Yugoslavia, as non-aligned country, is channeling her efforts, mindful of the fact that in Europe, as in the world at large, peace is indivisible. We therefore follow the prolongation of the Middle East crisis with anxiety in the awareness that the present state of affairs poses a serious threat to peace not only in this region but elsewhere. In that area we are still faced with aggression, policy of use of force and pressure. It is truly high time for the international community to marshal all its efforts for finding a peaceful political solution guaranteeing the legitimate rights of all the Arab peoples and prevent Israel to enjoy fruits of its aggression. This is the only way to eliminate the most dangerous crisis.

At the same time, we see that the colonial powers and racist regimes continue to pursue their policy of pressure in relation to the nations in the south of Africa. They endanger the security of some independent African countries and try to thwart the liberation movements in their struggle for independence.

Under the circumstances, the non-aligned countries, and all peaceminded forces, should carry on with their efforts to solve these acute international problems, as solution is also in their own interests.

Mr. Prime Minister, I should like to point out another serious problem besetting the international community. In spite of the efforts that have been invested so far, we are still faced with the fact that the gap between the developed and developing countries continue to widen to the detriment of the developing. Unless solutions are found for this complex of international economic relations, the growing differences between the rich and the poor could escalate into a serious threat to world peace. Consequently, the non-aligned countries must continue their endeavors in the United Nations and other international forums to find a solution to this major problem of our time.

Highly appreciative of the efforts you have been making Mr. Prime Minister, we share your opinion that it is indispensable to increase co-operation

between the developing countries themselves and to join efforts so as to persuade the developed countries to make an appropriate contribution to the rapid economic and general progress of the developing countries.

Preparations are now under way for the forthcoming summit conference of non-aligned countries which will be held this year in Algiers. I should like to underline the significance of this gathering which is being held at a time characterized by the growing role of non-aligned countries in current world trends, in development, in international co-operation and the securing of world peace. I am certain we share the opinion that this prominent gathering will represent significant contribution towards seeking solutions to the problems that weigh heavily upon the contemporary world.

Mr. Prime Minister, in congratulating you on the development of Singapore as one of the leading Asian economic centres, I should like to express our conviction that our two countries will continue their co-operation at the international level, with special reference to actions by the non-aligned and developing countries. I firmly believe that we shall develop our economic relations even more intensively in line with the mutual interest and the existing possibilities. No doubt, comprehensive co-operation will bring our two countries even closer together and consolidate our friendship further.

May I raise this glass to the health of His Excellency Benjamin Sheares, President of the Republic of Singapore; to the health of Your Excellency, Mr. Prime Minister, and to the health of your wife and your associates, as well as to the further co-operation and intensified friendship between the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Singapore.

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