

SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER, MR LEE KUAN YEW AT THE DINNER IN
HONOUR OF HIS EXCELLENCY U MAUNG MAUNG KHA, PRIME
MINISTER OF BURMA, ON 19 SEPTEMBER 1986, AT THE ISTANA

I take great pleasure in extending a warm welcome to you, Mr Prime Minister, and to the members of your delegation. My colleagues and I well remember our interesting and valuable visit to Rangoon in January this year when we received a most warm and friendly welcome from Chairman U Ne Win, and from you, Prime Minister, and your ministers, and from the people we met along the streets of Rangoon and at the Shwedagon. Your hospitality was most generous.

Burma and Singapore have been good friends. There are no issues which divide us. This friendship has grown and matured with the years. Your visit keeps our two countries closely in touch.

Singapore holds Burma up as an esteemed friend. Cooperation between us has increased gradually. I hope these ties will grow and multiply with time.

Mr Prime Minister, Southeast Asia is going through a difficult period. All countries in the region are experiencing low or negative growth. But their economics are fundamentally sound. When world demand revives and commodity prices improve, their economics will bounce back. We are working together in ASEAN to help each other through a rough patch. Next year, ASEAN will hold a summit to improve economic cooperation, to increase our bargaining position with our major trading partners like the US, Japan and Western Europe, and to counter the many problems and difficulties caused by increasing protectionism.

In our separate ways, Burma and Singapore have worked for peace and security in Southeast Asia. Burma's foreign policy had made a significant contribution to regional stability. You have five neighbours - China, India, Bangladesh, Thailand and Laos, and harmonious relations prevail with all of them. Singapore respects Burma's uncompromising policy of non-alignment. Burma's withdrawal from the Non-Aligned Movement after the Havana Summit in 1979, had a sobering effect on the radicals in the Movement. It helped the truly non-aligned to press for a return of the Movement to its original aims.

Distinguished guests, gentlemen, may I now ask you to join me in a toast to His Excellency U Ne Win, Chairman of the Burma Socialist Programme Party,

His Excellency U San Yu, President of the Socialist Republic of the Union of
Burma, and to the good health and success of His Excellency Prime Minister U
Maung Maung Kha.

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