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SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER MR LEE KUAN YEW AT THE BANQUET HOSTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF PARKISTAN, MR MOHAMMAD KHAN JUNEJO, ON 17 MAR 88 AT THE STATE GUEST HOUSE

Thank you for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to my delegation, my wife and me. I have been wanting to make this visit for some time. I am very happy to be in this gracious capital to strengthen the links between Singapore and Pakistan, and to get to know Your Excellency.

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The Islamic Republic of Pakistan has made big strides in growth and economic development during the past decade with average annual growth rate of 6.6 per cent. The growth rate is above the Asian average of 6.2 per cent between 1981-1986. This was achieved despite many problems facing Pakistan. This achievement is even more significant given the geopolitical realities of the South Asian region. The conflict in Afghanistan and the influx of more than three million Afghan refugees have put a great strain on Pakistan. The leadership of

His Excellency President Zia ul-Haq and your government has given a steady and calm sense of direction in the midst of external dangers and turmoil. To this leadership goes the credit for steering Pakistan to a brighter future.

Pakistan has played a major role in the search for a political settlement of the Afghanistan conflict. Your firm stand at the UN and the overwhelming support for the UN Resolution on Afghanistan have denied legitimacy to a government supported by external military intervention. Pakistan has thus helped to make the world safer for smaller states everywhere.

The progress towards a resolution of the Afghanistan conflict will have a positive impact on the outcome of the Cambodia problem. Following the talks between Prince Norodom Sihanouk and Mr Hun Sen, we look towards discussions involving other parties, including Vietnam, to work out the orderly withdrawal of foreign forces from Cambodia and an acceptable political solution.

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Pakistan has played a major role on the development of regional cooperation through SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation). A parallel trend in regional cooperation that has taken root in Southeast Asia is ASEAN, the Association for Southeast Asia Nations. SAARC and ASEAN in their respective regions can play a vital role to promote peace,

harmony and understanding. Closer links between the two organisations can emerge over time.

Relationship between Pakistan and Singapore have always been warm and friendly. Our two countries have cooperated closely in international forums such as the UN, the Non-Aligned Movement and GAAT. We are grateful for the unswerving support of Pakistan for the UN Resolution on Kampuchea. Singapore and the other ASEAN countries have been fully and consistently supportive of the UN Resolution on Afghanistan. Our cooperation on these two issues is durable, lasting almost a decade. The UN resolutions have given moral courage to freedom fighters in the two occupied lands to resist what had seemed immovable forces and denied legitimacy to foreign intervention. They have made an honourable solution possible.

On the economic front, there are good prospects for increased cooperation. Although bilateral trade has increased from S$40 million in 1970 to S$175 million in 1987, this is only a very small percentage of both our total trade with the rest of the world. This is probably because of our concentration on developing our respective exports to the industrialised countries. For its part, Singapore is prepared to buy more from Pakistan. Our traders and businessmen must be encouraged to explore the potential in both our markets.

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Finally, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I ask all of you to rise and join me in a toast to His Excellency President Zia ul-Haq, to the Prime Minister of Pakistan and Mrs Junejo and to the people of Pakistan.

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