

Prise de parole du Président de la République au déjeuner d'Etat à Singapour.

Mr. President, madam, ladies and gentlemen, Ministers, ladies and gentlemen, members of Parliament, ladies and gentlemen, ambassadors, dear friends, I have to confess, Mr. president, since this morning, I have a big issue, because each time Mr. president is supposed to speak before me, and I have nothing to disagree with and not to say much more than that, he said exactly what I wanted to say. And I have to confess it's not the best position to speak, because he made a perfect synthesis of exactly the spirit and the concrete achievements of the relation between Singapore and France.

But, Mr. president, let me thank you for the warm welcome and discussion we had this morning. But to tell you that this visit for my wife and myself and our ministers and the whole delegation means a lot. First, because, as you mentioned, this is the 60th anniversary of Singapore's independence. 60 years of diplomatic relations between our two countries, and 60 years of friendship, partnership and cooperation. And in fact, my problem is a source of confidence in the future, because after 60 years, we can say that we understand each other. And if “petit à petit, l'oiseau fait son nid” indeed, this is how trust can be built. 60 years of discussions, visits, common events. And I do remember your presence in the Olympic Games and the bronze medal won by your incredible athlete, Maximilian Maeder. But as well, 60 years of concrete projects, and I want to thank all the scientists and entrepreneurs and companies being part of this journey. In a few decades, your city state has seen exceptional growth, and today, it's a major hub of exchange and progress at the heart of Southeast Asia. And I have to say that Singapore is clearly a source of inspiration and admiration. And speaking from an old continent to such a young nation, we are very aware of the respect and the humility we have to deploy in front of you. For the constant flow of ships passing through from around the world, Singapore is a beacon at the intersection of cultures and talents. And you manage to preserve such a unity, such a strength, such a homogeneity with so many cultures.

It's very impressive. 200 years ago, sir Stamford Raffles explored the island of Pulau Ujong, seeking a strategic position and his name was given to the very hotel we are in today, where the path of so many women and men have crossed. And somewhere among the palm trees and Fushan Bougainvillea is the memory of the role of André Malraux, who once stayed here, thinking, writing and celebrating Singapore, describing it as a “starfish”, literally a star of the sea. In those 60 years, France and Singapore have never stopped advancing together, in particular in the field of science, where we have worked on building a fruitful partnership for many years. And indeed, you referred yourself to Pierre-Médard Diard and Alfred Duvaucel, who drew up a list of the island's fauna on flora at the end of the 19th century. But since this moment, even before your independence, our relationship is based on all the exchange between our institution scientists. Today, 200 French researchers live in Singapore. Our national center for Scientific Research has 4 research labs here. And since 2020, our common AI roadmap has maintained promising momentum, just like the digital and green partnership signed in 2022. 10 years after his death, France has not forgotten what it owes to Lee Kuan Yew, who was, on many topics, the tireless instigator of our bilateral cooperation project. And today, we acknowledge the fruit of his labor, as seen in the exchange of students, researchers and entrepreneurs between our two countries, nourishing our friendship. It can be seen in the vitality of our cultural cooperation as well.

This year, one of the events that illustrates our partnership is a beautiful exhibition by the photographer Melisa Teo. You mentioned her, a Singaporean who adopted friends entitled « Two Rivers ». And I had the pleasure yesterday indeed of discovering this both Singaporean and French artworks displayed on Anderson Bridge, which is fitting considering the many bridges between our two countries. But as well, “Yves Le Louvre” is here with the president and our Minister of Culture is because of this in-depth links and the friendship of so many people here in this room, accompanying our institutions and being part as well of our cultural ambition. From this story, these stories, a rigorous and solid friendship was born. From the beginnings of Singapore's independence, French businesses such as Air Liquide, CMA CGM, Thalès, STMicroelectronics set up here. In 1998, Cazaux Air Base in France welcomed the first Singaporean pilots, sealing a unique defense relationship. And two years ago, at the Elysée Palace, I had the opportunity to receive several Singaporean aviators to celebrate this extraordinary cooperation. Near the Bassin d'Arcachon, the city of Bordeaux, Singaporean families have, I hope, rediscovered the sea of their home, which calls them just like us to the open sea.

Today, we are determined to bring the EU and ASEAN closer together in a new world fragmented by tensions and wars. It is by joining forces that we will overcome the difficulties ahead. And I want to thank all precisely the institutions and entrepreneurs being present. And so many companies want to develop more, from Airbus to TKO And our small business and the small enterprises, they want to do much more with Singapore because they find here good friends. And you mentioned, Mr. president, I don't want to repeat you, you perfectly summarize the strength and the content indeed of the new comprehensive partnership which you signed. From Quantum to AI, from the classical industry to defense and so on, we have such a range of cooperation which is totally unique. Our defense corporation shared support of multilateralism and joint investment in breakthrough technologies are all paving the way for future generations. And the first step on this path is clearly this global strategic partnership that we have signed. Because this is not just a statement of intent, it is a tangible roadmap to invent together in the fields of artificial intelligence, quantum tech, civil, nuclear energy, education, cultural creation, so many real, concrete and positive cooperation. It is a promise we are making to the generations that follow so that we can tackle together the next 60 years with the brave spirit of the pioneers and your founding fathers. So please allow me to raise this glass to the friendship between Singapore and France, to our pioneers of yesterday and tomorrow, and for, I would say, such intimacy of our in depth south regarding our current global environment. But what we want to do with these friendships, a better world. With our great admiration and friendship, let me have a toast for Singapore and France.