



Testimonials for “Be At The Table or Be On The Menu: A Singapore Memoir”

I have known Jaya for some 50 years as a friend, an academic and a Cabinet colleague. He was part of Singapore’s second generation leadership which took over from the Old Guard to keep Singapore going. Jaya stood for continuity of strong, good governance in the interests of the people. He played a key part in shaping events and the world around us. Jaya’s stoutness of heart and hands-on leadership shine through in this recollection of his youth and subsequent Ministerial responsibilities. I hope they inspire younger Singaporeans to create their own destiny and build a better Singapore.

**— Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong,
former Prime Minister, Singapore**

Be At The Table or Be On The Menu is a comprehensive account of Professor Jaya’s numerous worthy accomplishments as well as outstanding challenges that he faced throughout his colourful political career. His book reads like a history book reflecting milestones in Singapore’s history, most especially during its formative years. We worked together closely during the drafting of the ASEAN Charter, where I was once again able to witness Professor Jaya’s caring and sharing for the peoples of Southeast Asia.

— Fidel Valdez Ramos, former President, Republic of Philippines

This is another excellent book by Prof Jayakumar. It complements his earlier book, *Diplomacy*, and gives us a more comprehensive view of his remarkable career and contributions to Singapore.

— Professor Tommy Koh, Ambassador-At-Large, former Permanent Representative to the UN and former Ambassador to the USA

He never spoke for the sake of speaking but when he did, you listened to every word because everything he said was meaningful. So too, with my good friend Jaya’s latest book, it is worth reading for the substance it contains.

This book is a treasure trove of ideas, thoughts, disputes, political challenges and, more importantly, how to deal with the very difficult situations. Most importantly, how a small country can maximise its international clout with the big countries and the superpowers. This is a must for students of politics anywhere and everywhere.

In my thirty years of political activity, I was used to my legal colleagues always looking to the law to solve a problem. Jaya is bigger than that. He sees problems multi-dimensionally and always comes up with a sound answer. In all the many different



meetings I was with Professor Jayakumar I always found him most engaging, sensible and firm along with that fine mind.

**— Rt. Hon. Sir Donald McKinnon, former Secretary-General
of the Commonwealth**

Professor Jayakumar occupied a vantage point to have made unique contributions to the success that is Singapore today.

At the domestic level, the book addresses issues of great importance and necessity which have ensured the political stability of Singapore – that a government must be based on law and on respect for the rule of law even when it enjoys an overwhelming majority among the electorate.

With wisdom and practical insights, Jayakumar gives a vivid account of how Singapore managed to achieve national stability and social-economic development by giving vent to the voice of the opposition parties in Parliament – even when not elected – and by protecting the political rights of ethnic minorities.

At the international level, Professor Jayakumar's commitment to the principles of international law and to the UN Charter, was put to the test on several occasions. After careful preparation and under his guidance, Singapore submitted itself to international jurisdiction leading to the peaceful settlement of its disputes with its neighbours.

Professor Jayakumar was not one to seek fame or respect, he was one to get the task done efficiently and with competence. But by his personality and wisdom he ended having both respect and admiration. We should be grateful for his book – enlightening, as it is instructive.

**— Abdul G Koroma, former Judge of the International
Court of Justice**

Jaya was my colleague when I served as Japan's Minister for Foreign Affairs. I respected and admired his leadership, foresight and wisdom as Foreign Minister of Singapore. He is a friend, a man of integrity and much warmth. He was persuasive because he was able to show how a certain policy can lead to enhanced mutual benefits. He was convincing because he was able to draw on his vast experiences in diplomacy. The chapter on foreign policy vividly illustrates how Singapore contributed to enhancing national, regional and global interests in the hands of Jayakumar. It also tells you how a small country poor in natural resources can become a great country rich in human resources.

— Yoriko Kawaguchi, former Foreign Minister of Japan



Straits Times Press

Professor Jayakumar is one of the most remarkable world leaders. Brilliant, superbly trained as an international lawyer, and with extraordinary leadership skills, he has been an essential part of the Singapore success story. Few have ever served in so many high-level government positions, or with such distinction on the international stage. Indeed, Jayakumar has long been my recommendation for Secretary-General of the United Nations. This outstanding memoir is must reading for all aspiring to a career in foreign affairs.

— John Norton Moore, Professor of Law at the University of Virginia, former US Ambassador, and former Chairman, the United States Institute of Peace