

## 1. ENHANCING COOPERATION BETWEEN SINGAPORE AND INDONESIA

On 25 Jan 2022, PM Lee Hsien Loong met Indonesian President Joko Widodo in Bintan, Indonesia for the fifth Singapore-Indonesia Leaders' Retreat (LR). They reviewed the progress made on bilateral cooperation since the last LR in 2019, discussed ways to expand collaboration in key areas of priority for both countries, and exchanged views on regional and global developments.

Both Leaders witnessed the signing and exchange of a set of agreements: the Realignment of the Flight Information Regions (FIR); the Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA); the Extradition Treaty (ET), as well as an Exchange of Letters undertaking to bring the agreements into force simultaneously. Collectively, these agreements are known as the "Expanded Framework of Agreements".

These key points were made by PM Lee:

- **Expanded Framework of Agreements**
  - The agreements represent a **significant milestone for bilateral relations**. They are **balanced, mutually beneficial, and durable** for Singapore and Indonesia.
  - All three agreements will come into force at the same time.
  - The resolution of these longstanding matters **put both countries in good stead** to further deepen engagement in mutual areas of priority.
- **Deep People-to-people Connections**
  - The full bilateral agenda was made possible by the support arising from the strong people-to-people ties and efforts from both sides.
- **Strong Economic Cooperation**
  - Singapore has consistently been Indonesia's top foreign investor since 2014, and our investments have grown despite the pandemic.
  - Both countries are strengthening institutional linkages to deepen financial cooperation, and are exploring new areas of collaboration, such as sustainability, the green economy, digital economy, and human development.
- **Regional Issues**
  - The situation in Myanmar remains serious.
  - Singapore will continue to work with the ASEAN Chair (Cambodia), and the next Chair (Indonesia), as well as other ASEAN Member States on the full implementation of the Five-Point Consensus on Myanmar and other relevant ASEAN decisions.

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*The conclusion of these agreements demonstrates the strength and maturity of Singapore-Indonesia relations.*

– PM Lee at the Singapore-Indonesia Leaders' Retreat 2022

### EXPANDED FRAMEWORK OF AGREEMENTS

#### 1) Flight Information Region

- Realignment of the boundary between the Jakarta FIR and the Singapore FIR
- Singapore will continue managing the airspace needed for Changi's traffic
- Will meet the civil aviation needs of both countries and ensure safety and efficiency of air traffic

An FIR is a specific region of airspace in which an air traffic services authority appointed by the International Civil Aviation Organisation manages civil aviation.

#### 2) Extradition Treaty

- Enhances cooperation between Singapore and Indonesia in combatting crime
- Grants extradition for a comprehensive list of offences, subject to safeguards in the treaty
- Adds to Singapore's extradition arrangements with many jurisdictions across the globe

An ET is an agreement that lays out the conditions under which extradition – the return of fugitives – to and from the countries involved may take place.

#### 3) Defence Cooperation Agreement

- Strengthens the strategic relationship between our defence establishments
- Promotes closer interactions between our two armed forces
- The SAF will continue to conduct military training and exercises in training areas in Indonesia, as provided for in UNCLOS, with full respect for Indonesia's sovereignty over its territory

DCA establishes a framework for defence interactions between Indonesia and Singapore, facilitating cooperation in multiple defence-related areas.

Images: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

## Our Close and Long-Standing Defence Ties

- Our defence establishments have enjoyed more than 40 decades of friendship, and continue to deepen their cooperation to tackle common regional security challenges.
- The SAF and Indonesian National Defence Forces (TNI) interact regularly through military exercises, high-level visits, professional exchanges, and cross-attendance of courses across the three Services and at all levels.
- These interactions serve to reinforce mutual understanding, strengthen friendships, and enhance the cooperation between the two defence establishments and Armed Forces.



Image: Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI)

[Sources: CNA, PMO, MFA, ST & TODAY, 25 Jan; MINDEF, 26 Jan]

## 2. FOSTERING GREATER TRUST AND CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN CHINA AND SINGAPORE

On 29 Dec 2021, DPM Heng co-chaired the 17<sup>th</sup> Joint Council for Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC) with China's Vice Premier Han Zheng. Both leaders affirmed that both sides should leverage bilateral projects and cooperation platforms to pursue our common interest in creating innovation-led, sustainable, and inclusive growth.



Image: Heng Swee Keat / Facebook

### Promoting Deeper Trust and Greater Collaboration

In 2020, in response to COVID-19, Singapore and China added public health as a new area of cooperation. The pandemic has also accelerated existing structural shifts in global trade flows and supply chains. Both countries agreed on:

- Exploring **new areas of collaboration**, such as digital economy and green development.
- Continuing discussions on the **safe resumption of cross-border travel** between Singapore and China, as well as the mutual recognition of digital health certificates.
- Renewing their **commitment to free and open trade**, and looked forward to the entry into force of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement on 1 Feb 2022.

### Affirming Existing Bilateral Cooperation

The 17<sup>th</sup> JCBC saw **14 Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)** and agreements signed, and reviewed bilateral cooperation in the following areas: (1) Belt and Road Initiative (BRI); (2) economic, trade, and sustainability; (3) finance; (4) innovation; (5) public health, and people-to-people and cultural exchanges; as well as (6) China-Singapore Guangzhou Knowledge City, a state-level bilateral cooperation project.

These agreements show how our cooperation has evolved with the times, with an emphasis on building connectivity, promoting the flow of finance and the digital economy.

### Strengthening Cooperation Between Singapore and China

Despite our difference in size, Singapore and China share common challenges such as ageing populations and climate change. Ahead of the JCBC, DPM Heng wrote an opinion piece in *Lianhe Zaobao* and *ThinkChina*. Here are the key points:

- **Strengthening Digital Connectivity in the Region**
  - The use of digital technology can enable economic recovery and long term growth by strengthening the flow of goods, data, and finance between the two countries.
- **Sustainable World through Sustainable Development**
  - Areas of cooperation include resource optimisation (plastic and e-waste management) and Zero Waste initiatives that build on the experience in the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City.
- **People-to-people Connectivity is Key to Fostering Mutual Understanding**
  - DPM Heng also highlighted the importance of restoring connectivity for post-pandemic economic recovery, as well as resuming regular people-to-people exchanges, including business leaders, scientists, and students.
  - We could also revitalise exchanges on social policies and governance, and work together on common areas such as developing the circular economy, and promoting green energy trade and investments.

[Sources: ThinkChina, 28 Dec; PMO, 28 & 29 Dec; MFA, 29 Dec; ST, 28 & 29 Dec; CNA, 29 Dec]

### 3. THE RISE AND FALL OF GREAT CITIES: LESSONS FOR SINGAPORE

On 13 Jan 2022, Minister Ong Ye Kung shared stories of a few great cities – Jericho, Chang An, and New York City at the Singapore Perspectives conference. Each city has lessons we can draw from them:

#### Ancient Cities such as Jericho

- The ancient city of Jericho was born of geographical advantage, with a combination of good climate, fertile soil, and an abundance of fresh water. Such conditions enabled hunter-gathers to settle over time, and form a very close-knit community. The numbers grew and a city was formed.
- With wealth came the need for defence and protection. For a city to defend itself, it needs to raise taxes, mobilise, and organise resources. And therefore, we saw the emergence of a state administration.
- However, the same geographic advantage also led to its fall, due to natural disasters, climate change, and foreign invasion.
- **Lesson for Singapore:** Despite being a global city, we are members of a close-knit tribe, sharing a common fate and destiny. However, unlike the inhabitants of Jericho, we are not a natural tribe of similar origins. **Singapore is a far more diverse and complex society than any ancient city.** Hence **nation building** in Singapore is a **long term, subconscious process.** We **work on what it means to be Singaporean**, day by day.

#### Political Capitals such as Chang An, Rome, and Constantinople

- These capitals began as well-located settlements, but gained strategic significance over time. They had a few common features: (1) situated at a confluence of trade routes; (2) had defensive advantages; and (3) were the seats of great powers, and developed significant military and technocratic prowess.
- Their character and significance shifted along the rise and fall of its parent empires. For example, Rome was plagued by constant threats of invasion, its military and administration were overextended to defend its massive territory, and there was an erosion of civic trust in the ruling elite.
- **Lesson for Singapore:** Although we are not an empire, there is a “Chang An” in us. To run an effective state, **good governance is key**; there is a need to get politics right, and **help the country find a way forward** even if the decisions involve very difficult trade-offs.

#### Modern Metropolises such as New York City, London, and Paris

- Characterised by complex networks of trade, financial services, maritime, aviation, info communications and other activities, modern metropolises are well connected to the world. These networks in turn need to be served by nodes or exchanges.
- Their significance is determined by the breadth of their networks, strategic clustering of industries, rich flow of capital and ideas, as well as their abilities to attract and retain global talents. They are constantly jostling for relevance in a hyper-competitive global economy; if a global node can be established, it can also be unplugged by a competitor.
- **Lesson for Singapore:** Our status as a global economic node is central to our survival as a city. Hence we need to **keep reinventing ourselves to stay relevant.** The biggest opportunity for reinvention lies in the post COVID-19 world. In many ways, the crisis is like a reset button, forcing us to **rethink the way we do things in smarter and better ways.**

In his conclusion, Minister Ong said that Singapore is not just a key node of the globalised world but one that connects the East and West, different parts of Asia, creating opportunities beyond our borders for Singaporeans and future generations. There is a **solemn commitment to give every community a space we collectively own as Singaporeans**, where everyone exercises the **spirit of give and take** rather than pushing for their own agenda at the expense of others. With these, we can determine our own future, and be a city, state and nation that thrives for many years to come.

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*The litmus test of what it means to be nation is actually in our Pledge – ‘One United People’... A nation’s people will have to have common experiences and go through trials and tribulations together. Over time, that togetherness will forge common ideals that transcend primordial tribal instincts and overcome forces that deepen social fault lines.”*

— Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung, at the Singapore Perspectives 2022 forum on 13 Jan

[Sources: MOH, 13 Jan; CNA, 13 Jan]

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