

In this issue of News In Focus, we take a look at regional developments and Singapore's domestic challenges and their potential lessons for Singapore.

## Key highlights from speeches delivered at the Shangri-la Dialogue, 2 - 4 Jun 2023



**Lloyd J. Austin III,  
Secretary of Defense**



“

*You see, more capable allies and partners magnify all of our security. So we're making extraordinary investments in our capabilities, alongside our allies and partners, to reinforce peace and prosperity in this region.*

”

- A free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific is anchored in key principles such as respect for sovereignty, adherence to international law, transparency, equal rights for states, and resolving disputes through dialogue and not coercion or conquest.
- The US is committed to working with its partners in the region on matters such as Defence, Climate Change, and Nuclear Proliferation, with the shared goal being to “deter aggression and to deepen the rules and norms that promote prosperity and prevent conflict”.
- The US will also work with allies and partners to uphold the freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea.
- On China, the US wishes to maintain peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, and emphasised that open lines of communication between the US and PRC's defense and military leaders were crucial.



**GEN Li Shangfu, State Councilor;  
Minister of National Defense**



“

*China stands ready to work with all parties to enhance our commitment to an Asia Pacific community with a shared future, promote sound development of regional security cooperation, strive to build an open, inclusive, transparent and equitable architecture, and pursue brighter prospects for security in the Asia Pacific.*

”

- Asia-Pacific is a shared home where regional countries live and thrive, and prosperity and stability in the region depends on sound security arrangements. China “firmly supports ASEAN centrality and its strategic autonomy”.
- Taiwan remains “the core of China's core interests” and an internal affair, and how to resolve the Taiwan question is a matter for the Chinese to decide.
- The Chinese and the US should live up to other countries' expectations, and that their bilateral relationship has global significance. China and the US will both benefit from cooperation and lose from confrontation, and that both sides must work together to navigate the bilateral relationship.



## Dr Ng Eng Hen, Minister for Defence



“

*In the absence of a strategic framework of engagement and mutual restraint, cooperation despite competition, that balance tilts away from deterrence and the risk of conflict increases.*

”

- Countries must strive to maintain peace and avoid a physical conflict.
- Especially in the economic domain, where shifting trade alliances and the growing salience of nativist economic policies were also strong winds of change that could have an impact on regional stability.
- It is important for countries to build and maintain channels of communication for dialogue.
- Examples within the region includes ASEAN member states having had sought to pursue military cooperation in an open and inclusive manner to prevent miscalculation and build confidence amongst regional militaries. This included involving the US, China and other ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus dialogue partners in multilateral exercises.

Watch the fully array of speeches at IISS' YouTube channel:

(<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL06gBmITAMbcBhegnodmW12PRgrHhtJfD>)



### Question for Conversations

Sources: IISS, MINDEF

What do the speeches at the 2023 Shangri-La Dialogue reveal about different countries' interests in the Asia-Pacific?



What role can Singapore play to maintain peace in the region?

We'd love to hear your thoughts! Drop us a mail at [nexus@defence.gov.sg](mailto:nexus@defence.gov.sg) PAGE 2



## Good Governance is of Paramount Importance to Singapore

The recent cluster of events that have raised eyebrows in our nation have also raised many questions. And PM Lee Hsien Loong's answers in the press conference on 17 July and in Parliament on 3 July reiterate the same takeaways: that good governance is of paramount importance to Singapore.



“ Sometimes things cluster up, but we make sure we put them right, and I hope I put them right and we will be able to set the right tone for a long time to come. Because we are not just maintaining high standards for one election term or one generation of leaders. You have to make sure that you can maintain this, sustain this, feel that sense of mission and responsibility, and be able to transmit that beyond your term into the next generation, and imbue the next generation of people who come forward to serve as well as people who grow up as mature Singapore citizens and voters to understand that this is how our system works, and this is how it has to work in order for Singapore to succeed. ”

– PM Lee at the press conference on the Resignations of Speaker Tan Chuan-Jin and MP Cheng Li Hui on 17 Jul 2023

Scan the QR codes to read PM Lee's responses to:



The ridout road rentals



Resignations of Speaker Tan Chuan-Jin and MP Cheng Li Hui



“ Remember, never let the system go corrupt. Never, never let that happen. Uphold standards, make sure that Singapore can work. ”

– PM Lee Hsien Loong's recall of Mr Lee Kuan Yew's speech on his 90th birthday gathering in Parliament

Sources: The Straits Times, 28 Jun; CPIB, 12 Jul; CNA, 12 & 14 Jul

Good Governance plays a key role in the development and prosperity of Singapore. With good governance, it is possible for a small country, like Singapore, to develop effectively.

In Singapore, there are some guiding principles that our government follows:

### 1. Meritocracy

- Every Singaporean has a chance to advance up the social ladder, where you are judged by your capabilities, and not your race, religion, or background.

### 2. Zero Tolerance for Corruption

- Singapore adopts a strict zero-tolerance approach towards corruption within its government and civil service.

### 3. Rule of Law

- Everyone is fair and equal under the eyes of the law.

### 4. Racial and Religious Harmony

- This is critical to building a multi-ethnic society.

### 5. Inclusiveness

- Singapore views social equity as crucial in its growth strategy.

## Everyone Has a Part to Play for Singapore's National Defence



- On 1 July, we commemorate SAF Day and reaffirm our commitment to defence.
- In his SAF Day message, Defence Minister Dr Ng Eng Hen reminded Singaporeans of the importance of a strong and operationally ready SAF which continually transforms itself to be capable and relevant to safeguard Singapore's peace and sovereignty and our way of life.



“ Equipment, facilities and platforms in the SAF can improve, but without the fighting spirit and commitment of our SAF soldiers, all these equipment and platforms are just mere steel or concrete. ”

– Defence Minister Dr Ng Eng Hen in his SAF Day Message 2023 on 30 Jun 2023

- Held annually since 1987, over 350 operationally ready NSmen and their employers gathered for the SAF Day Combined Rededication Ceremonies (CRCs) held four locations this year, namely: (1) Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCCI) Building; (2) Temasek Polytechnic; (3) Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre; and (4) Auditorium @ NUHS Tower Block.



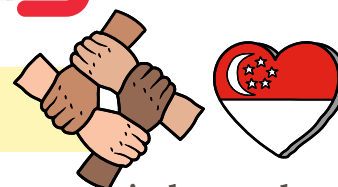
Sources: MINDEF, 30 Jun

- At these ceremonies, NSmen reaffirmed their pledge of loyalty and commitment to Singapore and the SAF.



Scan the QR code to access the SAF Day 2023 NE Engagement Package on SG101

## Strengthening Racial and Religious Harmony



- Every year on 21 July, we commemorate Racial Harmony Day to remind ourselves to not let racial differences divide us.
- Racial harmony isn't just one day, though it is important to set a day aside to remind us of its importance.
- Racial and religious harmony transcends tolerance, encompassing compassion and respect for one another's beliefs. It is about building relationships every day, sustaining our balance between celebrating differences and living common experiences.



“ It is important for our children to be aware that we live in a diverse society and that our difference is a strength and a cause to celebrate. ”

– President Mdm Halimah Yacob at a Racial Harmony Day event at Northbrooks Secondary School on 20 Jul 2023



Scan the QR code to access the Racial Harmony NE Engagement Package 2023 on SG101

Sources: The Straits Times, 21 Jul



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