# The Fight Against Terror

## SINGAPORE'S NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

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To the people of Singapore

# CONTENTS


Preface
A NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY FOR SINGAPORE 6

Chapter One
CONFRONTING TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM 10

Chapter Two
SINGAPORE'S EXPERIENCE WITH TERRORISM 18

Chapter Three
THE NEW SECURITY ENVIRONMENT 26

Chapter Four
SINGAPORE'S NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE 34

Chapter Five
IMPLEMENTING OUR STRATEGY 42

Chapter Six
NATIONAL SECURITY: A NATIONAL EFFORT 58

PREFACE

# A NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY FOR SINGAPORE

*Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam*
*Deputy Prime Minister*
*Coordinating Minister for Security and Defence*

## *Dear Fellow Singaporeans,*

Transnational terrorism poses a serious and prolonged threat to Singapore's national security. Because of the strong stand we have taken against terrorism in Singapore and in the region, and because of the part we have played in the global effort against terrorism, Singapore will remain a prime target for terrorists. Therefore, we have to prepare for a long-drawn campaign against terrorism, and we need to learn to live with the real prospect that a terrorist attack could occur in this country.

We have met the short-term objective of hardening Singapore by implementing various measures to safeguard our homefront security. However, we are not dealing with isolated or episodic events, but with the potential for organized, deliberate and prolonged terrorist action against Singapore. We thus need a total approach to the problem, as the impact of terrorism will be felt across many areas. We have to find creative solutions for these unprecedented challenges.

Given our geo-strategic circumstances and the evolving nature of transnational terrorism, we should take an evolutionary approach to developing our national security strategy. *The Fight Against Terror: Singapore's National Security Strategy* lays out a useful foundation. We now have a better understanding of the threat and of how we can counter it. The key ideas behind this strategy should be disseminated widely to create awareness and enlist support.

We need to get our starting point right, and it entails a correct understanding of the problems and threats that Singapore is up against. In this regard, we must have a consensus on the definition and characteristics of transnational terrorism. The threat is strategic. It is different from the terrorism we experienced in the past. Transnational terrorism is not a passing menace. It is a long-term peril. It has deep ideological roots. It has a global reach, and terrorists are prepared to go to extreme lengths to realize their aims. Terrorist groups are also capable of strategic calculations. A case in point is the recent train bombings in Madrid, where a tragic incident led to domestic political changes with foreign policy implications.

We must develop the appropriate strategy to combat transnational terrorism. The cornerstone of Singapore's strategy is a stronger and more robust inter-agency network. Given that transnational terrorism's centre of gravity lies outside Singapore, a stove-piped approach to internal security and external defence will no longer work. We need to implement a suitable structure that will prevail over the traditional boundaries of the various policy, intelligence and operations agencies. At its core, our national security strategy should aim to enhance coordination among the different ministries and national security agencies in Singapore.

We need, furthermore, to strengthen our national resilience. We have to encourage Singaporeans to stay calm and work together in the face of adversity. We need to take both collective action and individual responsibility for our security. We have committed ourselves to the global campaign against terrorism. In this, we must not waiver. We may face setbacks, but terrorism cannot defeat us unless we allow it to. I am confident Singaporeans will rise to the challenge.

*Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam*
*Deputy Prime Minister*
*Coordinating Minister for Security and Defence*

*August 2004*

CHAPTER ONE

# CONFRONTING TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM

If there is any doubt as to the intent of terrorists today, we need only recollect the events of September 11, 2001. The attacks against the United States claimed the lives of nearly 3,000 people from some 85 countries, underscoring the catastrophic nature of militant transnational terrorism. Closer to home, developments such as the Bali bombings in October 2002 which killed 202 people showed that South-east Asia is also vulnerable to attacks.

Singapore is high on the list of targets for terrorist action. It is important that we recognize this stark reality. The extremist regional network Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), which is intent on subverting governments in the region, has targeted us before. Those plots were foiled, but we can anticipate that there will be more attempts to attack us. Besides JI, we may face action from other extremist groups as well. Worldwide, Al-Qaeda elements remain active, planning future action against American and other interests.

We are not alone in the struggle against terrorism. Yet, we must realize that we are ultimately responsible for our own security. Terrorism is certainly not new to Singapore. It can be understood as the mounting of tactical operations aimed at achieving certain political goals. In terrorism, relatively little effort may be required to produce devastating results. It capitalizes on the element of surprise, but works over long time frames. Even if disrupted, terror organizations may regenerate themselves, and wait years before pursuing their objectives again.

*Osama bin Laden, leader of the Al-Qaeda global terror network.*

What is new in what we are facing, however, is the lethal combination of several especially extreme factors. The current trend of transnational terrorism is strategic in nature. It demonstrates a clear global reach, employs particularly sophisticated methods, and exhibits catastrophic outcomes. In particular, the Al-Qaeda-inspired movement also springs from a radical and dangerous ideology based upon distortions of Islam, devoid of any moral restraint. What we are witnessing currently is, in essence, an immense contest between those who seek peace and security and a ruthless fanaticism that must have no place in the modern world.

Singapore is part of this fight. We cannot simply opt out of it. We have to prepare for it, and meet it head on. To do this, we need new policies, structures and capabilities. What is our goal? There is no silver bullet available. Our goal is to minimize the country's vulnerability by deploying the strongest possible defences against terror attacks. We cannot guard every installation or scan every visitor. What we can do is reduce the threat to a tolerable level, so that terrorism does not have a significant impact on our society and economy.

## WHY DO WE NEED A NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY?

We have done much since the September 11 attacks to deal with the problem of transnational terrorism. The Government has sought to fortify Singapore by implementing a number of measures to safeguard our homefront.

We have raised Singapore's security standards in crucial areas such as aviation security, maritime security, land transport security, border control, and critical infrastructure protection.

In the past three years, we have also introduced new structures and enhanced existing organizations in the policy, intelligence and operations domains. For instance, we formed new agencies such as the Homefront Security Office and the Joint Counter Terrorism Centre, while also reinvigorating existing units such as the National Security Secretariat, to give a stronger focus to inter-agency coordination and integration. Together, these agencies have contributed greatly to anticipating threats, and in organizing and building up Singapore's defences against terrorism.

Although the Government has done much to protect Singapore against terrorism, the threat has by no means been eliminated. The arrests of terrorists like Mas Selamat Kastari and Hambali may have disrupted JI's operations in the region, but other key leaders are still at large. JI's regenerative potential has not been curtailed, as there will be those who will continue to be misled by its particular brand of ideology. As such, over time, JI can rebuild its capability. Although it would probably be more difficult for the group to

*"... no one can guarantee that a terrorist attack will not happen here. Our approach must be to make it extremely difficult for terrorists to carry out their evil deeds while at the same time, be well prepared and ready to deal with the repercussions if such an attack does happen."*

*Minister for Home Affairs Wong Kan Seng*
*Addressing Parliament on 14 March 2003*

*Inter-agency cooperation is demonstrated in Exercise Apex - a joint maritime security exercise between the Police Coast Guard (PCG) and the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN).*

carry out high-profile and complex terrorist attacks, they would still be capable of mounting small-scale attacks against targets in Singapore and beyond.

Terrorism will be with us for many years to come. "It will be a long war for Singapore and the region, and the end is not yet in sight," Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has cautioned. Singapore will continue to be vulnerable because of the very strong stand we have taken against terrorism, the arrests we have made to crack down on JI in Singapore, the assistance we have extended to regional efforts against terrorist groups, and the support we have given to the American reconstruction actions in Afghanistan and Iraq. We must thus expect that if the opportunity presents itself, terrorists will launch an attack on the island or against Singapore assets and interests overseas.

In dealing with such terrorism, we must develop a sustainable, long-term national security strategy and a coherent strategic framework. To do so, we have to continue to evolve beyond our traditional boundaries and established national security structures.

We need a total approach to the problem, as the impact of terrorism will be felt in many areas, affecting Singapore's foreign, defence, homefront, social and economic policies. If we do not continually shape our collective responses, the solutions that emerge may not be sufficiently comprehensive. We need a disciplined and deliberate strategy to anticipate the threat, to understand it, and to devise a response. It will focus our minds and sustain our efforts, even when the threat is not immediately apparent.

## WHY DO WE NEED THIS DOCUMENT?

*The Fight Against Terror: Singapore's National Security Strategy* outlines the nature of the threat that confronts Singapore today, briefly explains Singapore's security priorities, and describes the strategy we will adopt to counter terrorism. It seeks to provide all Singaporeans with a sense of where we are now, where we must go and what we must do in this security landscape. It is a common compass and roadmap for all stakeholders in national security.

Singapore's national security strategy aims, principally, to prevent threats to national security from developing in the first instance; protect Singapore against the more likely threats; respond to such threats if prevention and protection should fail; and achieve a quick recovery to return Singapore to a state of normalcy.

How will we do this? We will build up the critical expertise and competencies required to confront these challenges. We will strengthen existing agencies, and establish new ones, if necessary, to best meet the demands of national security.

We intend to achieve these aims through tighter networking and inter-agency coordination. This is the key tenet and cornerstone of our national security strategy. We need to build strong and durable bridges for a more robust national security network. Terrorism is a problem that cuts through governmental divides. The various ministries and government bodies in Singapore may work well together in the aftermath of a crisis, but we need to be certain that we can sustain the momentum. Equally important, we must ensure that our coordination in the lead-up to crisis situations falls into place as a matter of routine. Networking will

harness the capabilities of each party and maximize the use of limited national resources. We have taken a key step by establishing a National Security Coordination Secretariat at the Prime Minister's Office, right at the heart of government.

But networking goes beyond having separate security agencies working together. It must mean, also, that the fight against terrorism has to be a national one. Terrorism can be fought only through a strategy that brings together the whole of Singapore - the Government, businesses, civil society and individuals.

Beyond Singapore, networking efforts are also critical. The Government will work with like-minded countries from the region and beyond in intelligence exchanges, capacity-building activities and counter-terrorism operations. In formulating our national security strategy, we have also studied the counter-terrorism experiences of other countries, taking in key perspectives and insights. Singapore recognizes that the war against terrorism cannot be won by the efforts of one country alone. Nations need to build a united front against terrorism.

*Deputy Prime Minister Dr Tony Tan and Minister for Home Affairs Wong Kan Seng inspecting an emergency planning exercise.*

*"Our environment has become very complex. We will have to prepare ourselves both operationally and psychologically to deal with threats that may hit us - including those we cannot even anticipate now. The Government will make its best efforts and commit the necessary resources. On their part, Singaporeans need to understand and take a sensible perspective on issues such as terrorism...We have to see this as a feature of our environment and live with it without letting it paralyse us with fear."*

*Deputy Prime Minister and CMSD Dr Tony Tan*
*Speaking at the 2003 Temasek Seminar on 30 July 2003*

Yet, ultimately, our ability to deal with terrorism effectively depends not just on the lines of defence we erect, or the number of terrorists we arrest, or the amount of money we spend. It will also depend on how Singapore and Singaporeans face this challenge psychologically, as individuals and as a society. Terrorists are prepared to go to extremes and to escalate terrorist acts to induce fear and panic. We need to strike the right balance in getting Singaporeans to realize the gravity of the threat while not being paralysed by it. We will have to learn to live with terrorism, adjust ourselves to its daily reality, and remain resolute and resilient in the face of adversity.

CHAPTER TWO

# SINGAPORE'S EXPERIENCE WITH TERRORISM

Singapore has been struck by incidents of terrorism in the past, but these were isolated and episodic, and not at all representative of the transnational terrorism facing us today. Yet, these early events should be understood in their historical contexts, serving as milestones of our collective past. We dealt with them firmly and with resolve. We remember them as early challenges to our statehood.

Even before the country gained its independence, Singaporeans had to contend with sustained periods of danger. The Communist insurgency of the 1950s and 1960s gave rise to various acts of subversion and civil uprising. Elements were seeking then to install a Communist order in both Singapore and Malaya. The authorities carried out a series of successful operations against pro-Communist agents during those turbulent times.

## THE MACDONALD HOUSE BOMBING

Even as Singapore moved towards statehood, the fledging government had to confront many security threats. A grave act of sabotage was the MacDonald House incident on 10 March 1965, during the period known as the Indonesian Confrontation, when the then Indonesian government opposed Singapore's merger with Malaya to form a federal Malaysia. A bomb explosion at MacDonald House along Singapore's Orchard Road killed three and injured 33. The aim of the attack was to create public alarm and panic as well as lower public morale.

Although the incident did come as a shock to many in Singapore, the operatives behind the MacDonald House bombing were apprehended, tried and convicted - an early testament to the determination of the Singapore authorities to counter terrorism decisively. The country was able to recover quickly from this event.

*A scene of devastation after the bombing of MacDonald House on 10 March 1965.*

## THE LAJU INCIDENT

Nine years later, on 31 January 1974, four men armed with submachine guns and explosives attempted to storm the Shell oil refinery complex on Pulau Bukom. The group comprised two Japanese nationals from the Japanese Red Army and two Arabs from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Their goal was to disrupt the supply of oil from Singapore to countries such as South Vietnam, which had been engaged with the United States in a bitter war against the Communist North.

The operation, however, went awry and the terrorists had to flee the scene. They hijacked the ferryboat Laju at the Bukom jetty and headed out to sea. But the group was quickly intercepted and surrounded by marine police boats, customs launches and navy gunboats. Following several days of intense negotiations, the terrorists agreed to release the crewmembers they were holding hostage in exchange for a party of guarantors for their safe passage. A week after the abortive attack on Pulau Bukom, arrangements were made to transfer the terrorists from the Laju to the airport, where they surrendered their arms. The following day, 8 February, the terrorists left Singapore for Kuwait, bringing to an end a dramatic sequence of events.

## THE SQ 117 HIJACK

On 26 March 1991, at about six in the evening, Singapore Airlines (SIA) flight SQ 117 took off from Subang Airport in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, with 129 passengers and crew onboard. En route to Singapore, four passengers who claimed to be members of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) took control of the aircraft. At about 10pm, SQ 117 landed at Singapore's Changi Airport. The hijackers demanded the release from detention of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's husband and other PPP members. They also asked that the plane be refuelled, so that they could fly to Australia.

Singapore immediately activated a high-level crisis team. Early the following morning at 2.30am, SQ 117 was moved to an outer tarmac. The hijackers pushed two SIA stewards out of the plane, injuring them. They also threatened to kill one passenger every 10

minutes after dawn if their demands were not met. The situation was grave. An order was given to storm the aircraft. Elite commandos entered the plane in the early dawn hours, killing the four Pakistani hijackers and freeing unharmed all 118 passengers and nine crewmembers.

*"Unlike some other countries, Singapore does not roll over and play dead when threatened with a gun. It can and will fight back, effectively, ruthlessly."*

*The Straits Times, 28 March 1991*

## THE NEW FACE OF TERRORISM

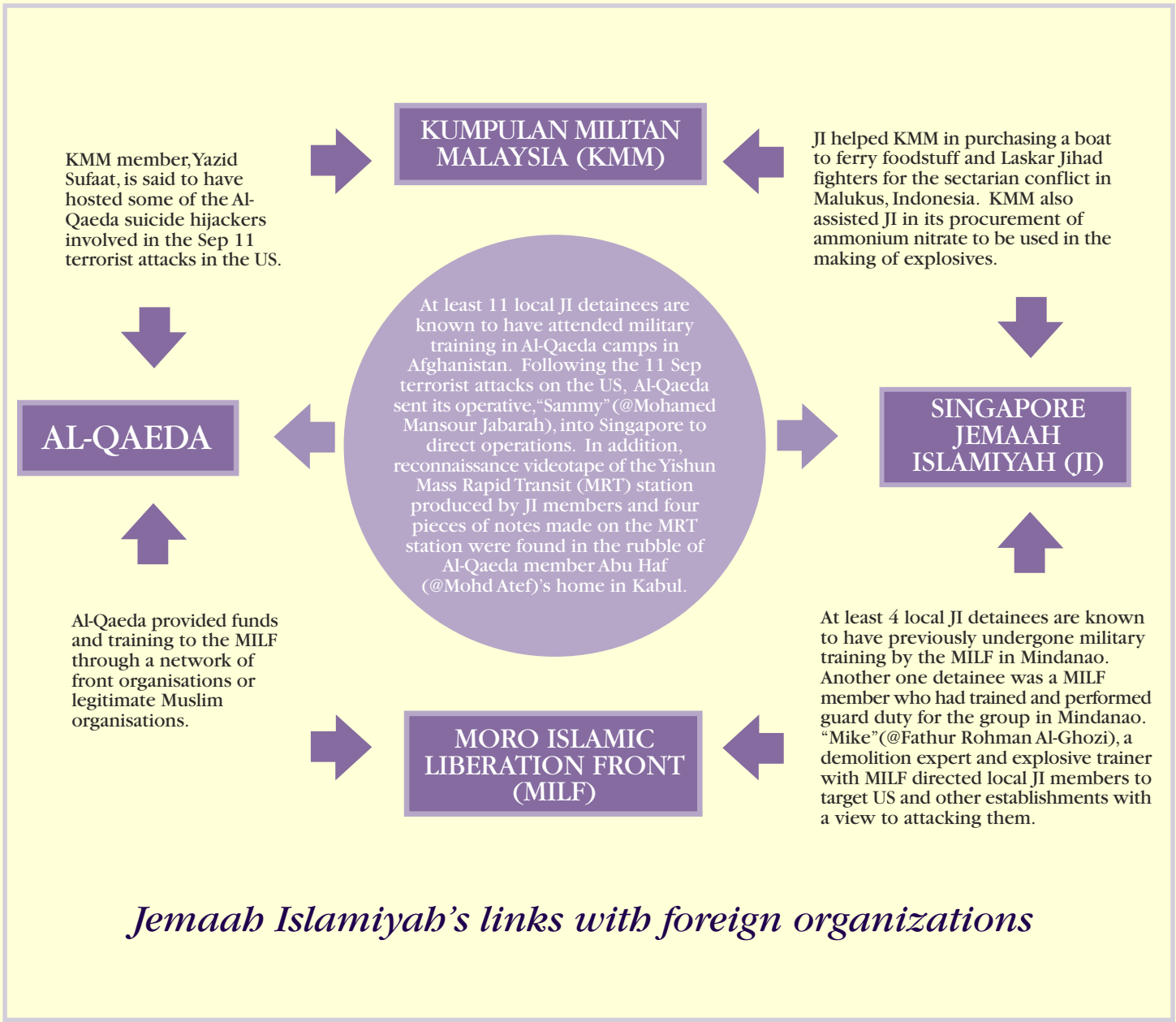
A decade on, terrorism continues to cast a dark shadow worldwide, threatening peaceful societies and established governments. From the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York, to the 1995 sarin gas attack in a Tokyo subway, and the 1998 US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, acts of terrorism have led to numerous casualties across several continents over the past few years.

### MAJOR PRE-SEPTEMBER 11 AL-QAEDA ATTACKS

- 1993 *World Trade Center bombing, New York*
- 1996 *Khobar Towers bombing, Saudi Arabia*
- 1998 *US Embassy bombings, East Africa*
- 2000 *USS Cole bombing, Yemen*

Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda network and its affiliates, which were behind much of the terrorist violence of the past decade around the world, present a new form of terrorism that is radically different from what Singapore and the rest of the world have been familiar with. Nonetheless, we have not stood idle in the wake of some of their recent operations.

*A catastrophic act of terrorism - the World Trade Center towers in New York hit by Al-Qaeda on September 11, 2001.*



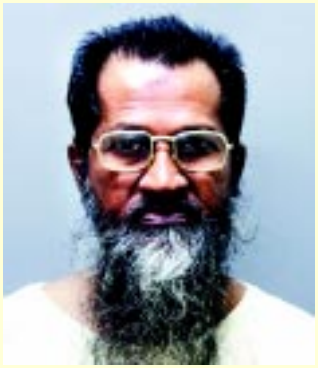

*Jemaah Islamiyah's links with foreign organizations*

*Source : Ministry of Home Affairs*

*The American Embassy in Singapore was one of the targets for terrorist action.*

Thirty-one persons were arrested and detained in two security operations against Jemaah Islamiyah in January and September 2002. Seven other persons were arrested and detained between October 2002 and December 2003. In January 2004, restriction orders under the Internal Security Act were issued against 12 persons. Many of those under detention or restriction orders were members, sympathizers or supporters of JI, while the rest were members of or affiliated to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the Philippines.

Authorities revealed that the Singapore JI operatives were planning to attack a range of targets in Singapore, including Western interests and local installations. They had sought to obtain tonnes of ammonium nitrate to be used for truck bombs. JI also planned to hijack an airplane and crash it into Singapore's Changi Airport. Andrew Tan, a terrorism analyst at Singapore's Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, noted that if realized, the JI attacks would have had grave consequences for Singapore.



*Ibrahim Maidin, spiritual leader of the Singapore JI cell.*

"Had these attacks succeeded, not only would they have inflicted heavy civilian casualties, they would also have had a devastating effect on the economy and shattered business confidence, with potentially uncertain consequences for communal relations as well," he commented.

Investigations further uncovered an elaborate network, in which local cell members worked under the direction of JI leaders based outside Singapore, and under the guidance of Al-Qaeda-linked agents. Through a combination of good intelligence and early action, Singapore was able to thwart the planned attacks.

With their capture, JI operations in Singapore have also been severely disrupted.

However, the threat will persist if JI terrorists intent on targeting Singapore are at large in the region. JI and MILF networks in Singapore may have been made ineffective by recent actions. Yet, in the longer term, the spectre of terrorism will hang over South-east Asia as long as JI-linked schools continue to train militants who receive instruction in camps like those under the MILF in Mindanao. At the same time, we must also guard against other extremist threats. The danger to Singapore's security remains.

*"One cannot forget that since the September 11 attacks on the United States, Jemaah Islamiyah has been one of the most active Al-Qaeda affiliates, and Southeast Asia one of the most important theatres of operation... It would be foolish to underestimate JI's capabilities or goals."*

*Dr Zachary Abuza*
*Terrorism Analyst at Simmons College, Boston*
*29 October 2003*

CHAPTER THREE

# THE NEW SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

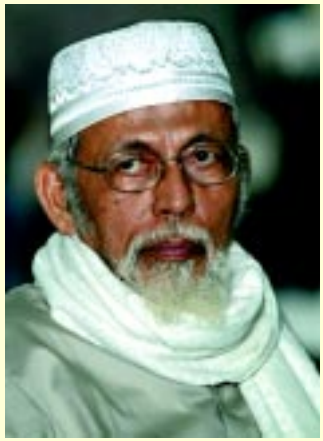
Before the events of September 11 highlighted the new era of transnational terrorism, Singapore's national security strategy had focused largely on building strong external defence capabilities. Singapore assembled a credible, citizen-based defence force. Well trained and well equipped, it was tasked with meeting clear military challenges from state-based threats. It was chiefly a conventional army geared towards fighting a conventional war.

At home, no less importantly, the Singapore Police Force and other homefront agencies were responsible for internal order and security. They dealt successfully with a wide range of threats, from Communist subversion to dangers posed by foreign terrorist elements. In the international arena, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs focused on diplomacy and managed Singapore's external relations.

But the regional security environment of today is different and complex. Singapore finds itself confronted by a form of terrorism that transcends borders. This terrorism, as highlighted earlier, has a global reach, is rooted in ideology, and employs sophisticated methods to achieve catastrophic outcomes.

## FEATURES OF TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM

Global Ambitions, Global Reach: Modern transnational terrorism has taken on a clear international dimension, with a global agenda and global network. Many other terrorist groups were more limited in their aims and areas of operation. Examples include the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the Irish Republican Army and the Basque separatist group ETA. In South-east Asia, for instance, the Abu Sayyaf operates mainly against the Philippines government. These groups generally mount terrorist activities largely within their own national boundaries.



*Abu Bakar Bashir, spiritual leader of Jemaah Islamiyah.*

*Images from a Jemaah Islamiyah surveillance video of Yishun MRT station and its surroundings.*

## THE ROLE OF MIKE AND SAMMY

*Jemaah Islamiyah's terror plot against Singapore was not entirely home-grown. JI members received critical help from two foreign operatives, codenamed "Sammy" and "Mike". Sammy, who was subsequently identified as Mohamed Mansour Jabarah, a Canadian national of Arab origin, was an Al-Qaeda agent dispatched to Singapore to assist the local JI cell in surveillance and the selection of targets. He has since been captured by US forces. Mike, who was also involved in directing the Singapore JI plot, was the name given to Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi, an Indonesian bomb expert who had served with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Philippines. He was captured in the Philippines and subsequently shot dead three months after escaping from detention.*

However, the transnational terrorism of the 21st century is strikingly different. Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda has explicit global aims. It seeks to destroy the United States and its Western allies, and establish pan-Islamic caliphates, overturning the international political order. In its quest, Al-Qaeda has spawned a network of affiliated terrorist groups across the globe that subscribes not only to its extreme terror tactics but also to its deviant ideology. Jemaah Islamiyah, a movement inspired by a similar vision for the world, is its principal South-east Asian representative.

The Singapore JI plot highlighted the international nature of the struggle. After authorities had uncovered the plan against the country, their subsequent investigations revealed that while the surveillance work was conducted by Singaporeans, the planning was done by an Al-Qaeda operative of Arab descent holding a Canadian passport. The bomb maker was an Indonesian living in the Philippines.

*"The most alarming aspect of the attacks on September 11th is that they conform to a trend in international terrorism that has emerged in recent years…the infliction of mass, indiscriminate casualties by enigmatic adversaries, striking far beyond terrorism's traditional operational theatres in Europe and the Middle East."*

*Dr Bruce Hoffman*
*Terrorism Analyst at the RAND Corporation*
*8 October 2002*

Ideological Perversion: Underpinning transnational terrorism is an extremist ideology that justifies terror attacks against civilized and open societies. It is an ideology based upon a gross misreading of Islamic religious texts, which is then used to rationalize current acts of terrorism. It debases concepts like jihad. All who stand in the way are considered legitimate targets, even co-religionists who do not share the same degree of fervour.

The current terrorist threat against Singapore has deep ideological roots. The social profiles of the JI suspects who had been arrested were no different from those of normal Singaporeans. They were educated, held stable jobs, and had families. They were neither

*More than 200 people lost their lives in the October 2002 Bali bombing.*

destitute nor disenfranchised nor dispossessed. Yet, they shared a willingness to cause destruction and kill others in the name of a higher spiritual calling. We have to recognize this extreme element and remain conscious of this ideological dimension when dealing with transnational terrorism.

Sophisticated Methods, Catastrophic Outcomes: Transnational terrorism is characterized by a high degree of operational and technical sophistication, making attacks more lethal and dangerous. Al-Qaeda and its subsidiary groups have repeatedly shown a capacity to mount multiple, well-coordinated strikes. The September 11 attacks, where flight-trained terrorists were able to commandeer four separate airplanes, are well documented. But Al-Qaeda and its affiliates have been able to maintain the momentum, and subsequent incidents in Riyadh, Istanbul and Madrid demonstrated their ability to launch highly synchronized terror bombings that resulted in hundreds of casualties.

Singapore's Minister for Home Affairs Wong Kan Seng has noted the fanaticism in modern-day terrorism.

"Nothing is unthinkable," he observed. "This moral free-fall and lack of restraint is what makes us sense that the scale of violence of this current terrorism has no boundaries other than what the imagination supported by opportunity and access to relevant resource can achieve."

Such sophisticated methods and tactics have allowed modern terror networks to seek catastrophic outcomes from their actions, looking to inflict maximum casualties. Attacks are often aimed at defenceless civilians, with little regard for human life, instead of hardened military targets. In an assessment of likely terrorism trends for 2004, terrorism analyst Rohan Gunaratna noted that Al-Qaeda poses more threat to such soft targets. "Because of government hardening of military and diplomatic targets, terrorists will shift their attacks to economic targets and population centres," he wrote.

The number of fatalities arising from a terrorist attack using weapons of mass destruction is likely to be significantly higher. While recent terrorist incidents have mainly employed conventional explosives, there is growing evidence that terrorist groups would seek to obtain chemical, biological and radiological weapons. It is crucial, therefore, that their efforts be stopped. In a recent speech, Singapore's Defence Minister RADM Teo Chee Hean warned, "The threat of terrorism is amplified by the risk of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction." He spoke of a nightmare scenario of terrorists and rogue regimes collaborating in the use of weapons of mass destruction - a scenario within the "realm of possibility". "If terrorists were to set off a nuclear device or chemical or biological agents, the damage and panic would be massive," he said.

## STRATEGIC CONVERGENCE

Clearly, the new security environment facing us is complex and varied. It does not permit us to simply say that we are a nation either at peace or at war. Consequently, Singapore's definition of national security must extend beyond the containment of conventional threats. It must take into account transnational terrorist threats from non-state elements.

The current structure for dealing with national security is characterized by sharp distinctions between foreign and domestic interests, and between external and internal issues, with functions largely performed by individual agencies. The emergence of transnational terrorism has created a new effect in national security policy and practice - the blurring of boundaries between government bodies responsible for national security. The separate and apparently distinct functions and capacities of the government agencies involved in national security *converge* when dealing with transnational terrorism. In devising a new approach to managing national security, the key lies, therefore, in strengthening coordination and integration among government agencies.

## POLICY CHALLENGES

The Government has to examine some critical issues that will shape our long-term national security strategy.

First, can we be totally safe? While the outcome of a conventional war can be definitive, the same cannot be said of the campaign against transnational terrorism. Given the nature of these terrorist threats, absolute security is unattainable. Even if the Government

## SARS – A VALUABLE LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR SINGAPORE

*The unexpected outbreak of SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) in 2003 taught Singapore many valuable lessons. Although it was not a case of bio-terrorism, it served as a useful exercise for government authorities, businesses and the public in tackling the spread of an infectious disease. Furthermore, SARS impacted not just Singapore's health system, but also had significant effects on the economy and daily life. SARS had to be defeated not only through the efforts of doctors and nurses, but also through the work of all Singaporeans. The episode demonstrated the need for tight inter-agency coordination and widespread community participation – elements which will be critical in meeting future national crises.*

aspires to achieve it, attempting to plug every conceivable capability gap will become an immense drain on our resources. As there are other national concerns such as education, housing, good and affordable health care, and sustainable economic growth, there is a need to prioritize and strike a balance between different goals. Security issues cannot become an overriding concern that displaces other national imperatives.

Second, what must change in our processes and structures? Having separate, specialized security processes can help sharpen the responses needed for specific problems. But seen against the context of threats to national security, separate processes, for example, to deal with internal and external threats would not be optimal when the line between the two has blurred. The SARS crisis has taught us the importance of a total approach to a national problem. Security requires us to confront a spectrum of threats, and for that, we would need to have a comprehensive approach and an over-arching strategy.

We are familiar with a hierarchical organizational structure where clear lines of command and control have always proven to be expeditious. The hierarchical

*HAZMAT (Hazardous Materials) teams train for both civil and security emergencies.*

structure favours consolidation, and a common vision and purpose. The national security mission of today, however, is complex. It involves too many entities and it is not possible to bring them all under one roof. The network approach would be a better fit for Singapore, given our small size and limited resources. This network, though, would need direction and coordination from a central hub that has sufficient influence to motivate constituent agencies. It would also need dedicated and forward-looking staff to anticipate, cope with and direct future events.

In short, the organizational challenge of national security is to mobilize, coordinate and lead government agencies, the business community and the general public to make Singapore better prepared, more secure and more responsive to an array of threats.

CHAPTER FOUR

# SINGAPORE'S NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

Singapore recognizes the diverse and constantly evolving nature of terrorism. To fight the terrorist threat in the long haul, the Government has adopted a multi-ministry networked approach. Networking integrates the work of otherwise separate bodies, enables inter-agency coordination and allows us to leverage upon the strengths of diverse organizations.

Traditionally, no single central body has directed Singapore's national security apparatus. Instead, various ministries share jurisdiction over security-related functions. Defence against conventional external threats comes under the Singapore Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence. Internal security has been the responsibility of Home Team agencies, such as the Police and the Ministry of Home Affairs. However, the problems of transnational terrorism present scenarios that involve multiple authorities and require varied expertise. No single agency will have all the resources or capabilities needed to handle the range of threats at all levels.

## THE HOME TEAM

*Agencies within the Ministry of Home Affairs are organized around the Home Team concept. It comprises the MHA Headquarters and the Singapore Police Force, the Singapore Civil Defence Force, the Internal Security Department, the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority, the Prisons Department, the Central Narcotics Bureau, the Commercial and Industrial Security Corporation (CISCO), and the Singapore Corporation for Rehabilitative Enterprises (SCORE).*

*Many different organizations, a multiplicity of purpose, but one shared goal of making Singapore the best home for all, one which is safe and secure.*

*Army-Police patrols at Changi Airport – a practical example of inter-agency coordination and convergence.*

How can this networked government be responsive and effective? A few critical efforts must be undertaken. First, an autonomous and influential node should be established at the centre of government to coordinate national security policies. It must be a strong centre which sets clear policy directions, but which leaves operational coordination and responses to other agencies. Structures and processes should be introduced to help maintain discipline and continuity. Where possible, structures should be built on what we already have to maintain a clear focus. Those that have proven to be robust should be allowed to continue to operate.

Next, the Government will put in place strategic forums to discuss critical issues and to promote a shared understanding of security concerns among all security policy-makers and practitioners. A national security strategic planning and policy process should be institutionalized.

Over time, there may be a tendency for organizations to expand rather than to build alliances. Networks and coordinating structures must be encouraged, as they will help agencies to leverage on each other's strengths, rather than duplicate resources and build competing capabilities.

While structures and processes for effective networking can be put in place, the real emphasis should be on cultivating a culture of collaboration. We have to nurture a propensity to think about how

we can achieve more as a team even as we play our functional roles. The key to doing this is to develop a common vision and invest in team building.

## NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

What are the elements of Singapore's revised national security architecture? Essentially, we have put in place a robust system that organizes the various agencies around the three essential security pillars of policy, operations and capability development.

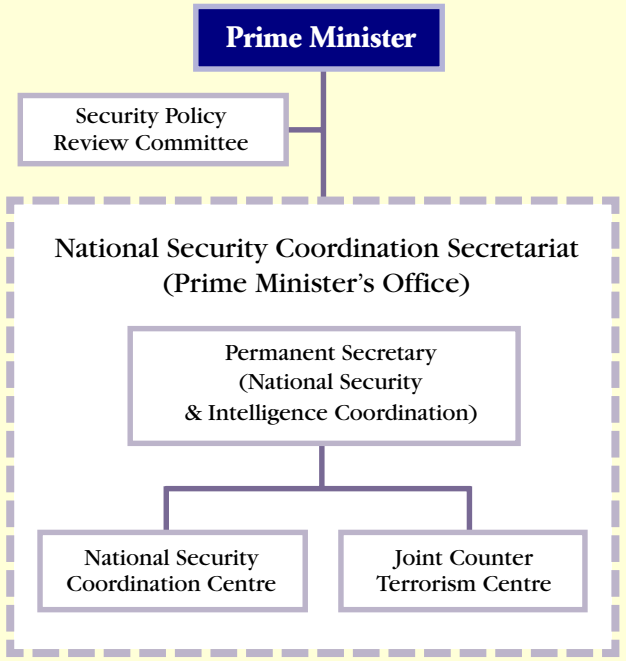
### *Policy Coordination*

For effective policy coordination, a new National Security Coordination Secretariat (NSCS), working under the guidance of the existing Security Policy Review Committee (SPRC), has been institutionalized at the heart of the Singapore Government.

Security Policy Review Committee: The Coordinating Minister for Security and Defence chairs this Committee, which also comprises the Ministers for Defence, Home Affairs and Foreign Affairs. The Committee meets regularly to guide national security strategy and policy formulation. It examines the country's most critical national security capability development goals, discusses critical issues and threats, and reviews prevailing national security measures.

National Security Coordination Secretariat: The Secretariat is an important central hub located within the Prime Minister's Office, tasked with national security planning and the coordination of policy and intelligence issues. A Permanent Secretary for National Security and Intelligence Coordination has been

*Security Policy Coordination in Singapore*




appointed to head the Secretariat. The Permanent Secretary will report directly to the Prime Minister through the Coordinating Minister for Security and Defence. He will chair a National Security Coordinating Committee comprising other permanent secretaries. This Committee will be responsible to SPRC for security policy coordination. In addition, the Permanent Secretary will also chair an Intelligence Coordinating Committee which will be in charge of coordinating Singapore's counter-terrorism intelligence activities.

The National Security Coordination Secretariat depends on two key agencies - the National Security Coordination Centre (NSCC) and the Joint Counter

Terrorism Centre (JCTC) - to support its policy and intelligence functions. The NSCC comprises separate groups to undertake policy, planning and risk-assessment and horizon-scanning responsibilities, including the operation of a Horizon Scanning Centre.

The JCTC provides intelligence and assessments on terrorist threats to facilitate policy-making and counter-terrorism efforts. It serves as a multi-agency centre of expertise on terrorism to provide comprehensive and timely terrorist-related threat assessments. The JCTC thus integrates the work of the various intelligence agencies and departments in Singapore.

*"The enhancements to the crisis management structure will enable my Ministry to plan for contingency responses more holistically."*

*Minister for Home Affairs Wong Kan Seng*
*Addressing Parliament on 12 March 2004*

*The Executive Group (EG) mechanism has been activated on a number of occasions, such as during the collapse of the Hotel New World in 1986, which killed 33 and injured 17.*

## *Operational Coordination*

There are established arrangements in Singapore to deal with national crises. Since 1978, the Government has maintained an inter-agency crisis management structure called the Executive Group (EG). The EG is a tested system, having been deployed for crisis situations ranging from the collapse of the Hotel New World in 1986 to the hijacking of SQ 117 in 1991. In 2003, the EG was activated to coordinate Singapore's response to the SARS crisis.

In fact, drawing from our experience with SARS, we know that national crises may come in unexpected forms. The threats and challenges we face are unpredictable and may cut across the ambit of a number of ministries and agencies. A robust crisis management framework is required to coordinate national responses, allocate resources and manage far-reaching consequences and implications. For better operational coordination, the Ministry of Home Affairs has introduced a Homefront Crisis Management System consisting of a Homefront Crisis Ministerial Committee (HCMC) and a Homefront Crisis Executive Group (HCEG).

Homefront Crisis Ministerial Committee: The HCMC is chaired by the Minister for Home Affairs and comprises other Cabinet Ministers as principal members. The HCMC provides strategic and political

guidance on the handling of crises with the aim of maintaining normalcy as far as possible.

Homefront Crisis Executive Group: The HCEG is a decision-making group, staffed by high-level policy decision-makers from the various ministries and government agencies. It is led by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Generally, the responsibility of the HCEG is to provide policy guidance and strategic decisions on the management of major crises. It will also provide operational coordination support to the Ministerial Committee, resolve cross-ministry issues and ensure that decisions and directives from the Ministerial Committee are implemented. The HCEG is supported by multi-agency and multi-discipline Crisis Management Groups where cross-agency issues can be coordinated and resolved quickly.

## *Capability Development Coordination*

Understanding Networking: A network must be supported by individuals equipped not just with their respective skills and specialties, but also with a common understanding of Singapore's national security strategy and policies. The Government will implement several programmes to further inter-agency exchanges.

For a start, a national security course will be conducted for senior security practitioners. The course, to be coordinated by the National Security Coordination Centre, will focus on the inter-agency and network-centric character of Singapore's national security architecture. It will be useful to the national security community in a number of ways. It enables a better understanding of transnational terrorism and explains the need for continued vigilance. It enhances the awareness of the specific organizations, linkages and processes that have been created or strengthened to deal with national security issues. In addition, it increases awareness of the various national security policies, and capability development and contingency plans.

The Government will also hold annual national security seminars for national security agencies. The seminars are organized by the National Security Coordination Centre. The Coordinating Minister for Security and Defence will use the occasion to present the broad national security objectives for the immediate future. The National Security Seminar will help to align individual government ministries and agencies with the larger national security picture and keep them updated on government policies. In this regard, it will provide insights into current issues and help explain new security initiatives.

Anticipating Surprises: In the longer term, we need to establish a risk-assessment and horizon-scanning capability to anticipate strategic surprises. In a world

*Deputy Prime Minister and then Defence Minister Dr Tony Tan addressing the inaugural National Security Seminar in June 2003, attended by senior security officials across the Singapore government.*

where threats can come right out of the blue, as we have learnt from our experience with SARS, it is useful to have a framework to help us deal with them in a coherent way.

Uncertainty and unpredictability are the key challenges, and our focus will be on anticipating surprises. Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for Security and Defence Dr Tony Tan has warned that globalization and our open borders present many more possibilities for the unexpected, which can inflict great damage and even alter our way of life. "SARS, for example, caught us completely by surprise," he noted. "We have learnt many valuable lessons from the experience, but the next strategic surprise may be very different from the last. Beyond the actual damage, the psychological impact of these surprises can be extremely serious and we would need to guard against being dislocated by such shocks."

The Government will strengthen risk-assessment and horizon-scanning capabilities to bring together different agencies in the tasks of monitoring and authoring scenarios, assessing risks and sounding early warnings. We will also work with think-tanks and research institutes, such as the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies to develop a common, in-depth understanding of the terrorism problem, especially its ideological underpinnings.

## EVOLVING ARCHITECTURE

The series of security structures and programmes outlined here serves to fully equip the Government to deal with various contingencies, whether episodic or of a prolonged nature, whether focused internally or with an external dimension. In summary, the National Security Coordination Secretariat will provide overall security policy direction in the national counter-terrorism effort. It will also coordinate Singapore's national intelligence agencies. As structures cannot remain inflexible in the face of evolving threats, we will continue to strengthen and upgrade the national security architecture to meet new challenges.

### STRENGTHENING CONVERGENCE: THE NATIONAL SECURITY COORDINATION CENTRE

*The National Security Coordination Centre at the Prime Minister's Office was formed in 1999 as the National Security Secretariat, a unit designed to strengthen coordination among Singapore's existing security agencies. NSS sought to forge and strengthen inter-agency links through the strategic convergence of these organizations and other relevant government ministries, directing efforts against the emerging threats of non-conventional warfare and transnational terrorism.*

Robust Security, Resilient Nation

*Renamed in August 2004, the NSCC is staffed by officers seconded from the Ministry of Defence, the Singapore Armed Forces, the Singapore Police Force, the Security and Intelligence Division, the Singapore Civil Defence Force and the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts.*

106
BRAS BASAH ROAD
sentosa
Nights out are
bigger at Sentosa
sentosa

CHAPTER FIVE

# IMPLEMENTING OUR STRATEGY

To deal effectively with the threat of transnational terrorism, Singapore has deployed a robust defence strategy built upon a well-organized network of government agencies, often working in partnership with commercial and private parties. This integrated, layered approach is structured around the Prevention, Protection and Response domains. By an effective combination of various measures, we can be confident of meeting major terror threats.

## PREVENTION

Prevention represents the most critical layer of defence against terrorism. A successful strategy saves lives, preserves property, and avoids potential disruption to our economy and society. It entails an integration of effective diplomacy, good intelligence work, and strong border controls. Where we can, we must ensure that terror threats are eliminated before they materialize.

*An Integrated Approach to National Security*

## *Singapore As a Responsible Global Citizen*

Singapore works diligently with partners in the region and the wider international community on various fronts. We recognize that the war against terrorism not only affects us, but is also a problem shared by many other countries.

Singapore leaders have spoken out clearly and consistently at various local and international forums against the threat of transnational terrorism.

More specifically, the Government has worked closely with other countries in implementing a series of practical anti-terror measures. For instance, Singapore responded swiftly in the passage of the landmark United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 of 2001, which established a legal foundation for international action against terrorism. According to Minister for Foreign Affairs Prof S. Jayakumar, this was "a landmark resolution which dealt comprehensively with counter-terrorism", providing "a legal basis for all states to take action against terrorists and their supporters."

*"Your nation has also been a vital and steadfast friend in the fight against global terror. Singapore has made determined and successful efforts to break up terror plots before they can take innocent lives."*

*United States President George W. Bush*
*6 May 2003*

*"We share together a lot of information on terrorism. We work together closely on trying to ensure that terrorism in the region is progressively brought under control…"*

*Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer*
*27 July 2003*

Singapore also signed the UN Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism in December 2001, ratifying it the following year. The monitoring and cutting off of funds to terrorist organizations constitutes a crucial stroke in the international effort against terrorism. Singapore is also a participant in the US-led Proliferation Security Initiative, a multilateral effort to combat the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

In the region, Singapore has joined other ASEAN states in appointing points of contact for intelligence liaison. This was formalized during the Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Terrorism in May 2002. In addition, Singapore co-hosted a workshop with the United States on counter-terrorism financing in January 2003. The workshop sought to help ASEAN and Pacific Islands Forum members strengthen their domestic efforts against terrorism.

*US Customs Commissioner Robert C. Bonner signs the CSI with Koh Cheng Hwa, Director-General of Singapore's Customs and Excise Department.*

## WHAT IS THE CONTAINER SECURITY INITIATIVE?

*Singapore is the first Asian country to join the US-led Container Security Initiative. The CSI recognizes the potential dangers posed by illicit seaborne cargo, such as bomb materials. CSI ports use intelligence to identify and target high-risk American-bound containers and pre-screen them before they are shipped to US ports. Many other ports worldwide have agreed to join the CSI and are at various stages of implementing the Initiative. Collectively, these ports handle two-thirds of container traffic shipped to the US.*

## WHAT ARE SOLAS AND THE ISPS CODE?

*The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) is one of the most important international conventions dealing with maritime safety. It is also one of the oldest, with the first version having been adopted at a 1914 convention. Since then, four other SOLAS conventions have been held. SOLAS specifies standards on safety for the construction, equipping and operations of ships.*

*The ISPS (International Ship and Port Facility Security) Code contains mandatory detailed security-related requirements for governments, port authorities, port facilities and shipping companies. A non-mandatory section contains a series of guidelines on how to meet these requirements. The Code provides a standardized framework to evaluate the risk of terrorist acts, enabling governments and ship operators to calibrate preparedness levels and potential responses to corresponding threat levels. ISPS-compliant ports put in place a wide series of security plans, with regular assessments and drills.*

Singapore was also the first port in Asia to implement the US Container Security Initiative (CSI) in January 2003. The CSI aims to screen high-risk containers before they arrive at American ports.

In other areas of maritime security, Singapore cooperates closely with member states of the International Maritime Organization to formulate measures to enhance security. Singapore has implemented special amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code).

## *Successful Intelligence Coordination*

One critical component in combating transnational terrorism is good intelligence. Accurate and early intelligence allows authorities to disrupt terror plots and arrest key operatives before attacks can be launched. The foiling of the JI plots stemmed from effective intelligence work. Singapore's intelligence agencies also cooperate closely with their regional counterparts on information exchanges. The arrest in Indonesia of Mas Selamat Kastari, the Singapore JI cell leader, and the arrest in Thailand of Arifin Ali, a senior member of the cell, demonstrated the effectiveness of coordinated action and intelligence sharing with other partners.

*Mas Selamat Kastari, the head of JI in Singapore, was arrested in Indonesia following a tip-off from Singapore intelligence agencies. He was accused of plotting an airborne attack on Singapore's Changi Airport.*

## *Effective Border Controls*

The security of individual Singaporeans is strengthened not just by protective measures at their doorstep, but also by strong controls at the borders of the country. Land, sea and air access into Singapore must be fortified by effective controls. Stringent measures are necessary to prevent the entry of foreign terrorist elements and materials. Recognizing the need to create a clear, coordinated border control system, the Government merged the border control functions of both the Customs and Excise Department and the Singapore Immigration and Registration to form the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority, or ICA, on 1 April 2003. The ICA now has seamless operational capabilities to monitor and regulate the movement of goods and people across Singapore's borders.

## PROTECTION

Improved capabilities to prevent terrorist actions will help to reduce the overall threat. Nonetheless, we still need to harden Singapore with a layer of strong, protective measures. Rather than protect every possible target, we have to prioritize our efforts, given

*Standing guard at access points to Jurong Island.*

our limited resources, and focus on areas of greatest concern.

## *Protection of Critical Infrastructure and Key Installations*

Since the September 11 attacks, the Government has enhanced the security of Singapore's critical infrastructure. We have instituted a range of security measures, such as the installation of surveillance cameras at power stations and water networks. More broadly, a National Critical Infrastructure Assurance Committee was formed to study the vulnerabilities of Singapore's critical infrastructure, and to recommend the protective steps to take.

Security at other local and overseas key installations, such as our embassies, has also been strengthened.

On Jurong Island, the site of Singapore's petrochemical hub, armed personnel, including Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) troops, have been deployed to increase security. They work closely with the Police Coast Guard and commercial security forces that guard sea and land access to Jurong Island.

Apart from the emphasis on the protection of key installations, security at prominent public places such as Boat Quay, the Esplanade and Holland Village has been stepped up as well.

## *Enhanced Security at High-profile Events*

Singapore plays host to various prominent international events each year, many of which draw top foreign dignitaries. These include regular fixtures such as the Asian Aerospace airshow and the Asia

Security Conference, also known as the Shangri-La Dialogue. A disruption of any of these events will not only offer terrorists a great symbolic victory, but will also inflict great harm on Singapore. The Government conducts thorough security assessments of each event. Depending on the level of risk, the appropriate security measures will be enforced to counter potential terrorist threats.

## *Land Transport Security*

The security of Singapore's land transport system is a critical issue for all citizens. Millions of journeys are made each day on Singapore's rail and bus networks. The economy depends significantly on the efficiency of this mass movement of people. It is vital, therefore, for commuters to be assured that their regular journeys are not only fast and efficient, but also safe and protected. This is something that the Government and transport operators are working hard to ensure.

In terms of emergency responses, there are extensive measures to deal with contingencies in the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) network. Agencies such as the Home Affairs Ministry, the Singapore Police Force, the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF), the Land Transport Authority and rail operators work closely to formulate detailed response plans. Exercises are held to test disaster management procedures, and regular security audits are conducted on emergency systems.

Many of the security measures in place at train stations, such as tightened access to vital premises and the use of close-circuit television to monitor the MRT network, were implemented as part of the security planning for Singapore's train systems. However, the March 2004 terrorist train bombings in Madrid have prompted a further review of land transport security in Singapore. Both the Police and transport operators will deploy security personnel at key locations. Public vigilance broadcast messages and posters have also been introduced.

*Millions of journeys are made each day on Singapore's public transport system.*

Furthermore, a Public Transport Security Committee has been formed to undertake a comprehensive review of security arrangements,

and to recommend and oversee improvements to the security of the public transport system, covering infrastructure such as bus interchanges, terminals, MRT stations and depots.

## *Aviation Security*

Singapore's status as an international aviation hub is not just a source of national pride, but is also the foundation on which much of the economy rests. It is a vital asset that must be well guarded. An Aviation Security Task Force was established in December 2002 to comprehensively review security measures at Changi Airport, on board SIA and SilkAir aircraft, and at overseas destinations. The Task Force has since completed its work. An ongoing National Civil Aviation Security Committee will oversee the implementation of the various recommendations and continue monitoring developments in the global aviation industry.

Some of the security measures enacted are visible to the public. At Changi Airport, access to restricted areas of the airport, aircraft and other key installations is guarded and closely monitored. The Police and SAF mount joint patrols of the airport concourse and other sensitive areas. All checked-in baggage is also screened through an in-line baggage screening system.

In the air, Singapore's two main airlines have moved to tighten and control access to the cockpit, and improve awareness in the cockpit of potential terrorist situations. Both carriers have implemented measures such as the installation of bullet-proof doors and surveillance cameras for the cockpit entry area. The most significant of the in-flight security measures is the deployment of air marshals on selected SIA and SilkAir flights.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore and the Republic of Singapore Air Force will continue their round-the-clock air defence capability, and remain on the alert for civilian airliners that may be hijacked for use as suicide weapons.

*Air defence detachments keep watch over the security of Singapore's skies.*

## *Maritime Security*

Since the September 11 attacks, security measures in the Singapore Straits and territorial waters have been constantly reviewed and upgraded. The maritime security agencies, such as the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN), the Police Coast Guard (PCG), and the Maritime and Port Authority (MPA) cooperate closely to protect Singapore against seaborne threats. For example, RSN ships escort selected high-value merchant vessels in the Singapore Straits while PCG boats have intensified patrols of sensitive vessels berthed in our territorial waters.

Among the security measures that have been implemented is the marking out of routes for ferries, pleasure craft and commercial vessels to keep them clear of sensitive anchorages and installations. The Government has also strengthened security at sea checkpoints including the Singapore Cruise Centre and Tanah Merah Ferry Terminal, and the waters around Sembawang Wharves and islands such as Pulau Bukom.

An integrated surveillance and information network at the Port Operations Control Centre, known as the Vessel Traffic Information System or VTIS, enables close cooperation between the various maritime agencies. It allows the Centre to monitor and provide timely information to vessels plying the Singapore Straits and territorial waters.

The Government has also set up a Maritime Security Task Force to look into further ways of enhancing maritime security and of promoting Singapore's broader maritime

*"The global shipping and port industry is an important cog in the machinery of world trade. An attack on a port or shipping lane would seriously disrupt trade... Southeast Asia, Singapore included, cannot escape from such threats."*

*Minister for Transport Yeo Cheow Tong*
*Addressing the International Maritime and Port Security Conference on 21 January 2003*

*(Top) Naval escorts for selected merchant vessels.*
*(Bottom) Inside Singapore's Port Operations Control Centre.*

interests. Singapore can be a useful reference port to other countries keen on strengthening maritime security. For example, we have gone beyond the provisions laid down by the International Maritime Organization to also equip smaller craft with transponder systems.

## RESPONSE

Should terrorist atrocities occur, Singapore must have the means of responding swiftly to restore the country to a state of normalcy. Major efforts will range from the saving of lives and the mitigation of the immediate effects of the incident to the broader restoration of economic activity. Emergency agencies, including the SCDF and hospitals, hold frequent exercises to test disaster processes and procedures.

## *Conventional Attacks*

### *(a) Bombing response capabilities*

Bombing continues to be the favoured tactic among terrorists, including those from Al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah. While military and commercial explosives have been used in terrorist bombs, stronger controls on access to these explosives have led terrorists to shift towards easily available dual-use materials. These include ammonium nitrate and potassium chlorate. Suicide bombers are also used to perpetrate these acts.

As bombing is the terror scenario that is most likely to occur in Singapore, our security agencies have taken note of the changing trends and adjusted our responses accordingly. Besides stepping up our detection capabilities at Singapore's border checkpoints, post-blast investigation capabilities are also being enhanced.

### COMMON TYPES OF EXPLOSIVES

PIPE BOMBS
*Terrorists use pipe bombs more than any other kind of bomb. They are easy to make, and can be hidden inside clothing or cars. Pipe bombs are made from iron, steel, copper or aluminium pipes filled with gunpowder. Sometimes the bombs are encased in a coating of nails to make them more potent.*

FERTILIZER TRUCK BOMBS
*These are powerful bombs made from fertilizer materials, comprising mainly ammonium nitrate. These bombs can be powerful enough to destroy large buildings.*

MOLOTOV COCKTAIL
*These bombs can cause a great deal of damage. Explosive substances are poured into a bottle that breaks when thrown against any hard surface. The explosive materials used might be gasoline, diesel fuel, kerosene or methyl alcohol. An improvised fuse is lit before the bottle is thrown.*

BAROMETRIC BOMB
*This is a more advanced type of explosive device. It is activated when placed in an airplane or elevator that rises to different altitudes. The bomb is set to arm itself when it reaches a certain pressure.*

*(b) Aircraft Hijacking*

Although aircraft hijackings began to lose favour among terrorists in the last decade, the September 11 incident in the United States refocused global counter-terrorism efforts on this tactic. Our security agencies have stepped up airport security considerably in response to this. As part of broader aviation security measures, the Ministry of Home Affairs has established an air marshal unit. Members of the unit serve as a last-resort attempt to thwart any hijacking while in flight.

## *Non-Conventional Attacks*

Although less likely than conventional attacks, non-conventional threats by terrorist groups represent one important focus for response agencies. To handle the dangers posed by chemical, biological and radiological attacks, the SCDF and SAF have both been steadily building up their capabilities over the years. The Tokyo sarin gas incident in 1995 was a major catalyst for current improvements. Today, the SCDF has an immediate response capability to handle chemical and biological attacks. In January 2003, the existence of the SAF CBRE (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Explosives) Defence Group was revealed as well. The Group aims to enhance capabilities against this multi-faceted threat.

Meanwhile, the Defence Science Organization National Laboratories (DSO NL) works closely with counterparts in countries like the United States, France and Sweden on CBRE-related research and development efforts. It also hosts international symposiums to promote the exchange of experiences among industry experts on chemical and biological agents. The Chemical Verification Laboratory at DSO is only one of 15 centres worldwide accorded a special status by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to test samples of suspected chemical agents.

*(a) Chemical Response Capabilities*

Chemical weapons use the toxic properties of chemical substances, rather than any explosive properties, to produce physical or physiological effects on targets. In their attacks, terrorists may use chemical weapons, including mustard gas, sarin or cyanide. The Government has invested heavily in building chemical defence capabilities over the years, with valuable work carried out by the Centre for Chemical Defence and the Defence Medical and Environmental Research Institute at DSO.

## WHAT IS A DIRTY BOMB?

*Some fears have been expressed that terrorist groups might resort to the use of "dirty bombs". This is a common name given to devices that injure and kill through the spread of radiation. A dirty bomb comprises conventional explosives, such as dynamite, attached to radiological material. When the bomb is detonated, the dynamite acts as a dispersal agent, propelling dangerous radiological fragments through the air. Such a bomb does not constitute a nuclear blast, but the immediate blast may affect hundreds, with many more exposed to radiological contamination.*

## BEATING THE NEW THREAT: EXERCISE DIAMOND SHIELD

*Ex. Diamond Shield was an integrated incident response exercise organized to counter both chemical and explosives threats. Units of the SAF CBRE Defence Group were activated to respond to a complex scenario comprising an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and a chemical device. The exercise featured search operations involving robots and chemical detectors, the removal of the IED, the decontamination and disposal of the toxic chemical device, and the treatment of chemical casualties. In their response to such a complex scenario, the units demonstrated their capabilities to deal effectively with a range of threats.*

*Source: Singapore Press Holdings*

*(b) Biological Response Capabilities*

The threat of bio-terrorism has taken a heightened profile, as the potential for rogue states or terrorist groups to acquire and use biological weapons such as the smallpox virus has risen. The United States went through an anthrax terror scare at the end of 2001. Thus far, there has been no specific bio-terrorism threat against Singapore. Nonetheless, we face high risks because of our openness and high population density, and must prepare accordingly.

Security agencies are working together with Singapore's health authorities to develop a nation-wide surveillance and alert system for the early detection of biological outbreaks. In addition, as these incidents could potentially affect large numbers of people, our medical authorities have looked into increasing their emergency treatment capacity to handle a potential influx of contagious victims quickly.

*(c) Radiological Response Capabilities*

Intelligence assessments indicate that the use of crude radiological dispersal devices, or "dirty bombs", may be within the current capabilities of terrorist groups. Such attacks may not necessarily cause as many casualties as biological or chemical attacks. However, they can spark off widespread alarm and mass panic. To counter this threat, the Government has deployed radiation detection equipment at border entry points to screen containers and personnel for radiological materials. Specialized detection and response capabilities to deal with radioactive releases will also be explored. In addition, the movement of radiological materials in Singapore is closely regulated and monitored by the relevant government agencies.

## HOW DSO DETECTS ANTHRAX SPORES

*In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the United States faced an anthrax scare, in which letters containing harmful anthrax spores were sent to several public figures. Copycat incidents then started appearing in other countries, including Singapore. A large number of hoax mail was discovered with suspicious-looking white powder which looked like anthrax spores.*

*With their effective containment and filtration capabilities, laboratories at DSO are able to handle both chemical and biological contamination. The suspect letters and parcels were sent there for biological analysis. DSO researchers were activated even at odd hours, in order to conduct swift checks of dubious powder found.*

*A secure method of handling suspect mail.*

## LOOKING AHEAD

Beyond the specific steps described, there is more that can be done. The various measures listed can deter most types of attack. However, as terrorism presents a wide spectrum of threats, we need to constantly assess what we can improve on, and what we can prepare against. We must also continue to build core capabilities in critical areas of defence, harnessing the best technologies available. Many of our current preventive, protective and response capabilities are based on good use of the latest technology. For example, information technology played a large part in the investigation of the JI plot against Singapore. We were facing IT-savvy terrorists. The Internal Security Department had to employ IT forensic techniques to penetrate a web of terrorist data, and useful information was eventually recovered. Through such effective use of technology and technical knowledge, Singapore can enhance its edge in the deployment of an advanced national security strategy.

The way ahead is clear. Technology specific to the counter-terrorism programme is one domain where, currently, possibly the greatest potential for development rests. We must ensure that improvements to both security hardware and software are complemented by imaginative approaches that constantly explore radically different and new options.

CHAPTER SIX

# NATIONAL SECURITY: A NATIONAL EFFORT

Defending Singapore is the Government's most fundamental commitment to its citizens. Whatever the threat, whatever the time, this task remains critical to the country's future security and prosperity. Transnational terrorism has the potential to hinder Singapore's journey forward. It can destroy lives, disrupt the economy, and damage our collective identity as a nation.

Our security is threatened because we have adopted an uncompromising posture on terrorism. Yet, on a more fundamental level, Singapore's very existence presents problems for some. Singapore is a target for JI activity because of its place as part of the *Daulah Islamiyah Nusantara* - a conception rooted in history and myth of a pan-Islamic superstate comprising much of South-east Asia. As long as we remain a secular state that represents modernity and progress, we will find ourselves standing against the extremist visions of terrorist groups.

Singapore is particularly vulnerable for a variety of reasons. We have open borders and an open society. Many American and other multinational corporations are based here. Millions of tourists visit Singapore each year. The economy is heavily dependent on international trade carried out through extensive land, air and sea links which must not be disrupted. The society is cosmopolitan, making it easy for infiltration.

Ultimately, the new transnational terrorism does not threaten Singapore's very existence as an independent, sovereign nation. Nonetheless, it has the capacity to inflict serious shocks on our economy and society, causing not only material and human damage, but also psychological injury. It further has the potential to pit different communities against each other, weakening the multi-racial, multi-religious character of Singapore that is vital to our success.

The national security strategy outlined in this document maps out how Singapore can be defended. It is a comprehensive solution designed to prevent terrorist incidents, protect our vulnerabilities, and help us respond effectively should attacks occur. The Government has shared this with the public to provide a common understanding on the threats we face, and the steps we are taking to confront the challenges of our times. It serves as a useful framework of reference for all of us.

But the battle against terrorism is not that of the Government alone. Now, more than ever, Singaporeans can see how the principles of Total Defence are relevant and must be applied to this fight. The five components of Total Defence - Military, Civil, Economic, Social and Psychological Defence - provide the framework for a comprehensive and coherent response. We need to muster our collective resilience and individual strengths to live with terrorism. This has to be a united effort against a national threat.

## WHAT IS TOTAL DEFENCE?

*Many people think of Total Defence as a defence strategy or plan that is rolled out only during times of war. But it is more than that.*

*Total Defence is about the different things we can do every day in every sector of our society to strengthen our resilience as a nation. When we take National Service seriously, participate in civil emergency exercises, upgrade ourselves and learn new skills, build strong bonds with different races and religions, and feel the pride of being Singaporean, we contribute to Total Defence. Introduced in 1984, the concept of Total Defence was adapted from the experiences of Switzerland and Sweden. There are two reasons why we adopted it. First, as a young nation with a small population, we cannot afford to maintain a regular armed force. Thus, we need to involve every Singaporean to multiply our defence capability. Second, the nature of modern warfare has changed. Wars are no longer limited to the battlefield. Instead, potential aggressors can strike in less obvious, non-military ways. The five elements of Total Defence work together as a comprehensive defence strategy for Singapore.*

TOTAL DEFENCE
THERE'S A PART FOR EVERYONE

*Source: http://www.totaldefence.org.sg*

## WHAT IS EPIC?

*"EPIC", short for "Emergency Public Information Centre", is a central information dissemination system, available at <www.epic.gov.sg>. EPIC is designed to cater to the public's need for official information related to major emergencies of nationwide impact, such as the collapse of a building or a big industrial fire. The public will also be able to obtain security-related information, such as what to do in the event of a bomb threat. Information dissemination is made possible through the coordination and integration of news releases and announcements from the various participating government agencies.*

*These are some features offered by the EPIC website:*

- *Useful tips on how to prepare for various contingencies/emergency situations*
- *Search for news of loved ones as a result of a major emergency in Singapore*
- *Be alerted to emergency-related news via email*
- *Search for important hotline numbers in the event of a major emergency and other useful contact numbers of emergency-related public services*

*Source: http://www.epic.gov.sg*

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Since the September 11 attacks and the disclosure of the JI plots, the Government has sought to increase public understanding of the terrorist threat, and highlight the roles each of us can play in the safety of our family, community and nation.

Public preparedness and vigilance are important. What should one do in the event of an emergency? How best do we respond? Where do we go to get more information? The Ministry of Home Affairs and the SCDF have programmes to brief households on

*Security posters on Singapore's public transport system, reminding commuters to be vigilant.*

the critical steps to take in times of emergencies. In the event that a catastrophic terrorist incident strikes Singapore, citizens must be ready to respond; they must be well prepared and well organized.

Beyond fending for themselves and their families, individuals have broader responsibilities. Each of us can serve as valuable eyes and ears of the national security system by looking out for suspicious persons or unattended items at public areas such as MRT stations or the airport. We can report possible gaps in our defences if we spot them.

The contributions which one individual can make should never be underestimated. In December 2001, it was an alert passenger on board a flight from Europe to the United States who spotted "shoe bomber" Richard Reid. The passenger's quick action prevented a terrible airborne tragedy. At home, it was through public tips that authorities were able to uncover the full extent of JI's plots against local targets.

Commercial owners, too, have a duty to provide security for their respective buildings or premises. After the September 11 attacks, the Government hardened critical infrastructure and key public installations. However, these measures are no guarantee that a terrorist attack against civil targets would not happen in Singapore. The strikes against nightclubs in Bali, cafes in Casablanca and the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta show that terrorists target commercial, retail and entertainment outlets.

The Ministry of Home Affairs and other agencies have been briefing building managers on the need to step up both their security provisions and response plans. However, hard defences alone are barely sufficient. A fundamental change in business mindset is required. Companies must come to see security as an integral issue in their work, and not as a peripheral concern. They must be proactive in constantly upgrading their security and emergency provisions. The necessary steps to take include business continuity planning, disaster planning and security certification.

## SOCIAL HARMONY

At a more important level, even if terrorism inflicts property or human damage, we cannot let it destroy Singapore's national psyche and sense of nationhood. Crucially, terrorism must not be allowed to break Singapore's multi-racial accord and divide Singaporeans along racial and religious lines. We have to respond as one people, cohesive and determined.

Al-Qaeda and related terrorist groups around the world, including JI, have rationalized their action in the name of Islam. Fighting Western and other secular governments, they seek to overthrow the existing international global order and replace it with one based on an erroneous interpretation of the religion. Transnational terrorism is an elemental struggle between competing ideologies. Al-Qaeda, with its anti-modern message, represents intolerance and extremism. Many Muslims worldwide have rejected Al-Qaeda's views of jihad and its perversions of Islam.

How do we in Singapore counter the divisive messages from Al-Qaeda and JI? The Singapore Muslim community has spoken out strongly against the actions of JI. It is moderate, tolerant and law-abiding, and condemns the actions of the militants. All

*The bombing of the JW Marriott Hotel in Jakarta in August 2003 killed 13 and injured many more.*

Singaporeans must also guard against extremist interpretations of religious teachings.

*"I strongly urge our Muslims to... speak up against developments which threaten the harmony of our multi-racial, multi-religious society. They must stand up against those who advocate intolerance and extremism. They should not allow the extremists and militants to set the Islamic agenda. They should not accept extremist views propagated in some other Muslim societies, as those are aimed at achieving political goals."*

*Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong*
*Speaking at the 2002 National Day Rally on*
*18 August 2002*

The continued success and viability of Singapore rests fundamentally on the multi-racial, multi-religious compact that forms its cornerstone. In generations past, we were no stranger to conflicts rooted in race, religion and ideology. In the 1950s and 1960s, Singapore was a poor and divided society with various groups pulling in different directions. We recall tragic incidents such as the

Maria Hertogh Riots of 1950, the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday Riots of 1964, and the clashes between communist sympathizers and authorities.

But this country became independent on the basis of a peaceful co-existence between the races. Through the years, nation-building has enabled every Singaporean to claim Singapore as a home for all. Living, studying, playing and working side by side, Singaporeans of all races and religions have built up mutual understanding and common values. All communities have contributed to Singapore's development and progress.

*"We condemn terrorism and will not allow Islam to be misused by any individuals or groups for their violent and destructive agendas. The Muslim community has always and will continue to stand united with other fellow Singaporeans to protect this nation against terrorism."*

*Statement from MUIS (Islamic Religious Council of Singapore), 10 January 2003*

In order to deny militants any ideological space, Muslims must speak out and denounce those who distort Islam. They have to engage the extremists, from the media to the mosque to the madrassah, and assert mainstream Islamic values. Singapore's Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew has highlighted this point frequently. "The

Muslim community must play a crucial role," he said. "Only Muslims can do this to challenge and correct these perverted interpretations of Islam," he stressed.

Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong has also emphasized that "every community must speak up against extremist voices that sow racial and religious discord among Singaporeans." Extremist elements, he said, sought to determine the agenda for their community, often against its interests, and those of the larger society. "If you do not disown such views, in time, they will gain legitimacy. Others will also come to associate these extreme views with the community, and distrust will set in."

Singaporeans of other faiths have a role too. They must be careful not to link acts that are perpetrated by terrorists, whether globally or in Singapore, to the local Muslim community and cause them to be defensive for no reason other than sharing a common faith. In their reporting and analysis of such events, journalists can play a key role as well, by understanding the local context and reflecting correct perspectives in the news media.

Shortly after the September 11 attacks, Singapore established Inter-Racial Confidence Circles (IRCCs) to promote multi-racialism and inter-communal harmony. The IRCCs serve as important platforms for religious and community leaders to build personal trust and confidence. Regular interactions will help build mutual rapport between the races, and provide opportunities for parties to address racial and religious problems on the ground. In announcing the setting up of the IRCCs in 2002, Prime Minister Goh said, "The primary objective is to get our irrational fears off our chest, and get to know each other better."

To date, IRCCs have been formed in all 84 constituencies in Singapore. The IRCCs complement the ongoing efforts of many in the community - schools, religious institutions, civic organizations, corporations - that have worked tirelessly to strengthen community bonding and social harmony.

*"What if the terrorists had succeeded? Supposing the bombs had gone off, and innocent Singaporeans had been killed. What would have happened to our racial harmony? Then whatever we said about this being the work of a tiny extremist minority, there would have been heightened distrust and fear among the different communities. We could easily have had racial incidents, leading to retaliation and counter-retaliation. Overnight this would undo 40 years of building a multi-racial society. To forestall this, we set up the IRCCs. If any terrorist attack should happen, the community and religious leaders in the IRCCs would already have worked with each other, and built up trust and confidence in each other."*

*Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong*
*Speaking at the IRCC Forum on 4 April 2003*

## ROBUST SECURITY, RESILIENT NATION

Our Singapore story is the account of how a small island-nation overcame its vulnerabilities and prospered, despite overwhelming odds. The comfortable life we enjoy today is built upon the difficulties of yesterday. Previous generations have weathered colonialism and the Japanese occupation, and fought against Communism and communalism. Their efforts have not been in vain; modern Singapore stands as a testament to their courage and fortitude.

Today, we find ourselves confronted by the peril of transnational terrorism. Elements from beyond and within are seeking to destroy what we have built. Thus far, we have beaten off the challenges that threatened our security. Over the past two years, the Government has done much to raise the standard for security measures in Singapore. It has comprehensively reviewed areas such as critical infrastructure protection and border controls. Beyond implementing robust security measures, it has focused on shoring up psychological resilience. It is vital that we remain undaunted as a people in this battle against terrorism, as strong in mind as the country is steadfast in purpose.

With an understanding of the trials of our times, we must be prepared for and geared up to confront further terrorist action. As long as the Government stays resolute and the people remain united in the fight against terror, Singapore faces a secure future. Like our forebears, all of us who call this island-nation home must work together to build a lasting legacy and write another shining chapter in the Singapore story.

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