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SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS &
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AT THE 2ND ASEAN COUNTER-
TERRORISM WORKSHOP ON JOINT INCIDENT MANAGEMENT ON
15 JULY 2014 AT ORCHARD HOTEL**

Ambassador Haruhisa Takeuchi,
Chief Executive, Home Team Academy, Mr. T. Raja Kumar,
Distinguished Guests

Good morning. I am happy to join you here at the 2nd ASEAN Counter-Terrorism Workshop today.

2. I would like to begin by acknowledging the important role that the ASEAN-Japan Counter-Terrorism Dialogue (AJCTD) has played in initiating and facilitating discussions about regional security, and on pertinent topics such as counter-terrorist financing, money laundering and crisis management. It has also spawned the ASEAN Counter-Terrorism Workshop as a useful operational platform to exchange best practices and enhance counter-terrorism cooperation in our region.

3. At the 1st ASEAN Counter-Terrorism Workshop in 2011, the importance of crisis management was recognised, and today's workshop will allow further in-depth discussion on this area. The workshop will also provide the opportunity for us to renew and strengthen existing relationships within ASEAN, and take a united stand against a threat that transcends national boundaries.

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The Evolving Face of Terrorism

4. Globally, the threat of terrorism is still very much alive today. It remains diverse, complex and unpredictable.

5. While the Al-Qaeda core has been weakened with arrests and deaths of key leaders, it still provides the ideological fuel for Al-Qaeda affiliates which continue to plan and execute attacks against nations. For example, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which is inspired by Al-Qaeda's global *jihad* ideology, has recently emerged as a key player in the Syrian conflict, having reportedly attracted 85% of the foreign fighters in Syria. ISIL's growing dominance is evident in the group's recent re-taking of the Syrian city of Raqqa, the capture of large swathes of Iraqi territory near Baghdad, and the seizure of Iraq's second largest city of Mosul. Through these events, the ISIL is fast gaining eminence over other rebel groups, lending greater appeal to its ideology and attracting even more foreign fighters to its cause.

6. These developments in Syria and Iraq cannot be ignored. The victories by the ISIL have tremendous potential to embolden the insurgents and boost their recruitment efforts. This, in turn, can have an impact on the terrorism situation in our region.

The Regional Threat Landscape

7. In the region, despite sustained security operations by regional authorities, there have been signs of a resurgent Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). This was underscored by the arrest of JI veteran Yazid Sufaat in February 2013 in Malaysia for his re-involvement in terrorism activities.

In Indonesia, JI-linked terrorist cells such as the Jemaah Anshorut Tauhid and the Mujahidin Indonesia Timur have also emerged. Both groups subscribe to JI ideology and are operationally linked to known JI members.

8. At the same time, we need to be vigilant against extra-regional elements like the Hizbollah. The foiled plots in Thailand at the beginning of 2012, and more recently again, in April 2014, serve as important reminders of the threat posed by Hizbollah and Iranian elements in the region.

9. The lure of conflict zones has compounded the regional terrorism landscape. Southeast Asians, like those from elsewhere, have not been immune to calls to join the *jihad* in Syria. Already, it has been reported in the media that more than 100 individuals from our region are in Iraq and Syria to join the ISIL. The ISIL's recent successes could inspire even more Southeast Asian recruits to join the group.

10. Beyond the physical world, cyberspace has offered terrorists a cloak of anonymity from which they can recruit, spread propaganda, raise funds and train a new generation of terrorists. We also need to guard against terrorists who can carry out cyber-warfare on internet users and institutions. Impressionable youths are vulnerable to self-radicalisation and manipulation by extremist clerics who spread misguided teachings through mediums like the Internet.

Singapore's Counter-Terrorism Strategy

11. To effectively deal with the threat of terrorism, Singapore adopts a robust multi-pronged strategy involving a network of government agencies working in partnership with the private and people sectors, as well as with our community partners and international counterparts. Our strategy consists of five critical layers - Intelligence and International Cooperation, Border Control, Target Hardening, Community Involvement, and Crisis and Consequence Management.

12. Most pertinent to this workshop's theme is the layer of Crisis and Consequence Management, in other words, how we respond when an incident does occur in spite of all our preventive measures. For this, we have what we call the Homefront Crisis Management System. This system adopts an "All-Hazards" approach to manage, mitigate and resolve the impact of any crisis, including a terrorist incident, by harnessing Whole-of-Government resources to ensure a return to normalcy as soon as possible. Through the central coordination of actions by various agencies, this approach ensures clear command and control and alignment of political, strategic and operational responses.

It is also important to note that beyond the immediate management of any incident, it is equally important to ensure that there is strong oversight of the recovery process and also to look out for and coordinate responses to wider, knock-on effects that could arise. At this workshop, participants will hear about Singapore's Homefront Crisis Management System, as well as learn about the experiences and incident management frameworks of our fellow ASEAN member states. This will

facilitate an exchange of ideas and allow each of us to critically review our own systems.

ASEAN Cooperation Remains Vital

13. The fact that we are having this workshop attests to the excellent cooperation within ASEAN, in particular on counter-terrorism. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of international and regional collaboration in the fight against terrorism, both at the political level and operational levels. For example, ASEAN has adopted various declarations and initiatives on counter-terrorism that continually reaffirm our collective commitment against terrorism.

In particular, the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism (ACCT) is a significant milestone in ASEAN counter-terrorism cooperation with much potential in the areas of information-sharing and capacity-building. I am heartened to note that all ASEAN member states have ratified the convention.

14. At the operational level, security forces within ASEAN conduct bilateral and multi-lateral training exercises regularly, such as the ASEAN Plus counter-terrorism exercise in Indonesia last September within the framework of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus. The exercise involved more than 500 personnel from all ASEAN member states and the eight dialogue partners. Certainly, there is a healthy level of collaboration within ASEAN currently, but at the same time, we should always look to see what more can be done. This

workshop is a step in the right direction, by creating a network of incident managers within ASEAN.

Conclusion

15. The fight against terrorism is an arduous one, and requires us to constantly stay ahead of would-be perpetrators to successfully prevent any attack. But no system is foolproof, and this means we must also be prepared to respond to an attack if and when it happens.

16. On this note, I wish all participants a fruitful workshop over the next three days and that the discussions will have practical outcomes for you.

17. Thank you.

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