



SPEECH

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Collision at Sea : Statement by Chief of Defence Force

13 Jan 2003

Ladies and gentlemen of the media,

The collision between the RSN's Patrol Vessel, RSS Courageous, and the merchant vessel ANL Indonesia was a most tragic event.

We have recovered the bodies of three of our servicewomen who died in the course of duty. Unfortunately we have not been able to locate the fourth missing servicewoman, 2SG Chua Bee Lin. Our hearts go out to the families of the 4 servicewomen.

As you know, the SAF has been making massive efforts in the search and rescue operation to recover the four missing servicewomen. This operation was mounted immediately after the collision to rescue the injured and search for any missing crew members. The SAR operation was conducted from the air, at sea, underwater, and on land. It covered the Eastern Singapore Strait, the northern coast of Bintan and Batam, and the southeastern coast of Johor. We are now into the 10th day of the SAR operation. Unfortunately, the SAR and salvage operations have been hampered by poor weather and rough seas because of the monsoon season. After seeking the advice of forensic experts, we have decided to bring the search and rescue operation to a close. It will be terminated this evening at 1900hrs. We will continue to provide support to the families to help them through this very difficult time.

The SAR operation involved resources from the Navy, the Air Force, the Police Coast Guard, and the Singapore Civil Defence Force. Both Indonesia and Malaysia also assisted us with naval, air and ground search resources. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Indonesian and Malaysian armed forces for their assistance and cooperation. I would also like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the Singapore Police Force, the Singapore Civil Defence Force, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, and all other agencies that have assisted in the SAR efforts.

I am also personally heartened by the dedication displayed by both the RSN and the RSAF in the search and rescue operation. During this difficult period, I have seen how the Navy worked together as a cohesive force in the SAR operation and in supporting the families of the four servicewomen as well as the surviving crew. I'm confident that the Navy will emerge from this episode as a stronger and more resilient force.

The SAF operates under extreme and challenging conditions. We recognise the risks involved in military operations and that is why we have always taken all necessary precautions and put the highest priority on safety. This accident was most tragic and regrettable. But we cannot allow it to distract us from focusing on the SAF's mission - which is to be ready and vigilant to defend Singapore.

04 Jan 03 - Collision at Sea (Document No: MINDEF_20030104001)

04 Jan 03 - Collision at Sea : RSS Courageous Towed Back to Changi Naval Base (Document No: MINDEF_20030104001_2)

04 Jan 03 - Collision at Sea : Statement by DPM and Minister for Defence, Dr Tony Tan (Document No: MINDEF_20030104003_3)

05 Jan 03 - Collision at Sea : Body Recovered from RSS Courageous Identified to be CPL Goh Hui Ling (Document No: MINDEF_20030105001)

05 Jan 03 - Collision at Sea : One Female Body Found at Bintan Lagoon Resort (Document No: MINDEF_20030105001_2)

05 Jan 03 - Collision at Sea : Body Found at Bintan Lagoon Resort Identified to be 1SG Heng Sock Ling (Document No: MINDEF_20030105001_3)

05 Jan 03 - Collision at Sea : One Female Body Found at Sebong (Document No: MINDEF_20030105001_4)

06 Jan 03 - Collision at Sea : Body Found at Sebong Identified to be 1SG Seah Ai Leng (Document No: MINDEF_20030106001)

06 Jan 03 - Collision at Sea : Military Funeral for 1SG Heng Sock Ling and 1SG Seah Ai Leng (Document No: MINDEF_20030106001_2)

06 Jan 03 - Collision at Sea : All servicemen Warded in Hospital Discharged (Document No: MINDEF_20030106001_3)

06 Jan 03 - Collision at Sea : Statement by DPM Dr Tony Tan on Visit to Incident Site (Document No: MINDEF_20030106001_4)

06 Jan 03 - Collision at Sea : Comments by MINDEF Spokesman on Search and Rescue Operations (Document No: MINDEF_20030106001_5)

08 Jan 03 - Collision at Sea : Update on Search and Rescue Operations (Document No: MINDEF_20030108001_2)

11 Jan 03 - Collision at Sea : SAR Focuses on Coastlines of Bintan and Batam (Document No: MINDEF_20030111001)

13 Jan 03 - Collision at Sea : Statement by Chief of Defence Force on Mon, 13 Jan 2003 (Document No: MINDEF_20030113001)

14 Jan 03 - Collision at Sea : Aft of RSS Courageous Successfully Lifted from Seabed (Document No: MINDEF_20030114001)

15 Jan 03 - Collision at Sea : Work on Sheared off Section of the RSS Courageous Complete (Document No: MINDEF_20030115001)

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