



SPEECH

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Speech by Chief of Navy, Rear-Admiral Ronnie Tay, at the Opening Ceremony of Changi Naval Base

21 May 2004

Prime Minister Mr Goh Chok Tong and Mrs Goh, Minister for Defence Rear-Admiral Teo Chee Hean and Mrs Teo, Minister of State Mr Cedric Foo and Mrs Foo, Senior Parliamentary Secretary Associate Professor Koo Tsai Kee, all distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good evening:

For more than three decades, since its early days in the 1970s, the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) had been operating out of Brani Naval Base. From being a small fleet focused on coastal operations, the RSN progressed and grew in the 1980s into a more balanced Navy charged with the mission of seaward defence of Singapore and protection of its sea lines of communications. It soon became clear that Brani Naval Base alone would not be able to support the increasing requirements of the RSN. A second naval base at the western end of Singapore in Tuas was thus planned. Another was to be subsequently constructed to replace Brani Naval Base, so that the land and seafront there could also be returned to the state for higher economic use.

Tuas Naval Base was thus built, and it was officially opened by Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong on 2 September 1994. Today, the RSN is once again most honoured to have Prime Minister and Mrs Goh officiate at this Opening Ceremony of Changi Naval Base. I would also like to express our sincere appreciation to all our distinguished guests for taking time to be present here today on this occasion.

The idea of building this base on land reclaimed from the sea east of Changi was first conceptualized in 1990. Land reclamation commenced in 1992 and was completed in 1997. Following the groundbreaking ceremony officiated by then Second Minister for Defence Admiral Teo in January 1998, construction of the base proper commenced, and Changi Naval Base was moulded into shape over a period of about three years.

In August 2000, the RSN's LST RSS Resolution had the privilege of being the first ship to sail into the newly built Changi Naval Base. Since then, the other operational and support units from the Fleet and Naval Logistics Command have progressively moved here from Brani and Tuas Naval Bases, in tandem with the completion of the various facilities. With the vacation of Brani Naval Base at the end of 2000, the RSN now operates from its two naval bases, in Tuas and Changi.

The entire Changi Naval Base development occupies a total land area of 86 hectares. The base was designed to be an intelligent one, harnessing technology for all its base activities. There is extensive use of information technology and automation in the areas of operations, training, security and support. The base is also built with environmental protection and conservation of resource usage in mind.

Changi Naval Base was built to provide for the RSN's current demands and cater for future requirements. Its range of operational and support capabilities include berthing space of 6.2 kilometres, command buildings for the units of the Fleet and NALCOM, a High Performance Magazine for efficient munition storage, a Naval Warehouse with a fully automated storage and retrieval system, and a Ship Lift compound for responsive on-base maintenance. The training base will house the Training Command, its three institutes as well as its suite of shore simulators.

On behalf of the RSN, I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to all involved in this Changi Naval Base project. We want to thank the Ministry of Defence for its strong support, the project steering committee for its invaluable guidance, the Defence Science & Technology Agency's Building and Infrastructure Division and the RSN's Project Office for all their hard work in seeing through the successful implementation of this project, and the many more who have contributed in one way or other towards this project over the past years.

I would also like to thank NALCOM and all the units involved in organizing and participating in today's event. Finally, I would like to once again express our sincere gratitude to Prime Minister and Mrs Goh for officiating at this Opening Ceremony of Changi Naval Base, and to all our distinguished guests for your kind presence here today. It is now my pleasure and honour to invite Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong to address us. Prime Minister, sir. Thank you.

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