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Minister for Defence on Official Visit to China

13 Oct 2008



Minister for Defence Teo Chee Hean inspecting the Guard of Honour with Minister of National Defense Liang Guanglie.

Minister for Defence Teo Chee Hean called on State Councillor, Minister of National Defense and Member of the Central Military Commission, General (GEN) Liang Guanglie this morning. GEN Liang also hosted Mr Teo to an official lunch as part of Mr Teo's official visit to China from 12 to 16 Oct 2008.

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Both defence ministers exchanged views on the regional security situation and the development of a regional security architecture. They reaffirmed the importance of the defence relationship as a component of the longstanding and multifaceted bilateral relationship between Singapore and China, and agreed to enhance exchanges between the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Both sides also agreed that it was important for countries like Singapore and China to work together for regional peace and stability, both at the bilateral level and in multilateral forums such as the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Shangri-La Dialogue.

As part of the visit, Mr Teo also met with Vice Premier and Member of the Politburo Standing Committee Li Keqiang. Over the next few days, Mr Teo will be meeting with other key provincial officials and senior PLA commanders in Urumqi, Zhanjiang and Shenzhen, and visiting the South Sea Fleet in Zhanjiang.

Mr Teo's visit to China is a continuation of the exchange of visits by defence ministers since 1997. Mr Teo's last visit to China was in 2005, while then Minister of National Defense GEN Cao Gangchuan visited Singapore in 2006.

Mr Teo's visit underscores the progress in the defence relationship between Singapore and China following the signing of the bilateral Agreement on Defence Exchanges and Security Cooperation (ADESC) and the inaugural Permanent Secretary-level Defence Policy Dialogue (DPD) in January this year. The ADESC formalises ongoing activities between Singapore's Ministry of Defence and the PLA, including exchanges of visits, attendance of each other's courses and port calls. It also includes new areas of cooperation such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The DPD provides a useful platform for both sides to exchange views on regional security and to discuss defence exchanges and security cooperation.

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