



SPEECH

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Speech by Senior Minister Of State For Defence, Mr Ong Ye Kung, At The Launching Ceremony Of The Third Littoral Mission Vessel, On 13 October 2016, 1040Hrs, At St Marine's Benoi Yard

13 Oct 2016

Chief of Navy Rear-Admiral Lai Chung Han
Chairman of ST Marine Mr Lim Ah Doo
President and CEO of ST Engineering Mr Vincent Chong
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning. My wife, Diana, and I are delighted and honoured to be here to launch the third Littoral Mission Vessel - LMV Unity.

Clear & Present Threat of Terrorism to Singapore

Our national pledge opens with the declaration "We, the citizens of Singapore, pledge ourselves as one united people" and enshrines Unity as a fundamental attribute of our nation. In this year's National Day message, Prime Minister Lee emphasised the importance of unity in our country and society. He reminded that unity, I quote, is "more than just a warm, fuzzy feeling, but the iron resolve to hold together, despite the challenges, despite the sacrifices we have to make."

The reminder comes at a time when global terrorism threatens to pull our society apart; technological advancement drives dramatic changes in jobs and skills required and is widening the divide between the skilled and unskilled; epochal developments in geopolitics can put a small country like us determined to act in our own interest, but sometimes in awkward positions.

But amidst all the threats we face today, the clear and present danger is a terrorist attack. Terrorist groups have renewed calls for attacks on tankers in the Malacca Strait and on US naval warships deployed to Singapore. There have also been increased arrests of suspected terrorists in our region. In recent months, Malaysian police have detained individuals suspected of plotting terror attacks across Johor on the eve of Malaysia's Independence Day. Indonesian police have also arrested members of a terror cell in Batam, who had plans to fire a rocket into the Marina Bay area.

When Singapore experiences a terror attack, the impact will not only be on the lives lost and the damage to property. It will impact our way of life and our social fabric. This is the aim of terrorists – to inject fear, undermine trust, and weaken the resilience and social fabric of our society.

The RSN, together with Singapore's security forces, is working hard to detect, prevent and, if necessary, respond decisively to attacks. But, we cannot depend only on our security forces. How Singaporeans respond after an attack is far more critical in determining how we bounce back, and truly define who we are as a nation. That is why we launched SGSecure, a Whole-of-Government effort to collectively defend ourselves. SGSecure conveys that key message, that if something happens, when something happens, Singaporeans must stand together, and we will endure.

How apt then, that this ship is named Unity. LMV Unity reminds us to hold together despite the challenges we may face. Unity is our strongest defence against any sort of attack. We must be united in our goal for a harmonious and peaceful Singapore, and stand together to guard against the growing terror threat. We must be cohesive during peacetime, and even closer together in the aftermath of a crisis. We will not allow terrorists to disrupt our social harmony and multi-religious peace.

"Smarter" LMVs that Embody the Concept of "Unity"

Since its humble beginnings, the RSN, with its national maritime security partners, have been working together to keep a 24/7 watch over Singapore's waters, to ensure the seaward defence of Singapore and protect the sea lines of communication that power our economy.

The "smarter, faster, and sharper" LMVs will replace our Fearless-class Patrol Vessels, which have been in service for over 20 years. The LMVs are far more capable and versatile, and will take the RSN into the future. The LMVs are designed to operate in a network, each a sea node of a web to ensure maritime security.

They can also be quickly reconfigured with mission modules, including unmanned systems, helicopter operations, medical facilities, and a boarding team capability, to fulfill a wide range of missions.

It has a lean crew of less than 30. The LMV also adopts an innovative operating concept which brings people together in an Integrated Command Centre. The ship's Bridge, Combat Information Centre and Machinery Control Room are co-located, as compared to other warships where its navigators work in separate areas from its warfighters and engineers.

Conventionally, a ship's combat capability would be designed first, before the engineering support is worked out. This approach is known as "supporting the design". The LMV adopts an innovative approach, known as "designing the support". This is where maintenance was considered upfront so that the LMV could be easily operated and maintained with a very lean crew.

Take for example the LMV's mast design. Many conventional designs optimise a warship's mast for combat effectiveness. This results in key components of combat systems being situated at inaccessible locations such that maintenance would require scaffolding or even for the ship to be docked. Instead, our LMVs adopt a stacked mast design, where the crew can easily access more than 90% of the system components within the mast, in harbour and at sea. As a result, less time is required for maintenance, which in turn increases the LMV's operational readiness.

Today, we have students from secondary schools, junior colleges, polytechnics and the Institute of Technical Education with us today. I hope you will be excited to know that our LMVs have been designed with you, our future sailors, in mind. The man-machine interface has incorporated multi-touch and gesture-based technologies that you should be very familiar with. This will help to enhance the LMV's operational efficiency and user experience. So our Smart Nation movement has now moved to the high seas.

Beyond all these capabilities, I think what is gratifying is how the RSN, DSTA, ST Marine and our defence technology industry partners have come together to successfully create a "Uniquely Singapore" LMV design. This is also unity subtly at play and underscores how everyone has a part to play in defence.

Conclusion

To the Commanding Officer and crew of LMV Unity: Thank you for securing our seas and defending our home. I am confident that you will live up to the fine name that your ship bears. Once again, congratulations to the RSN. I wish you all fair winds and following seas. Thank you.

News Release:

- Third Singapore-made Ship Launched: Littoral Mission Vessel Programme Progressing Well (MINDEF_20161013001.pdf)

National Archives of Singapore