



Release No.: 22/JUN
09-1/90/06/09

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MR WONG KAN SENG
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Momentous changes have occurred in international affairs. The geopolitical landscape has been reshaped beyond recognition. Communism has crumbled in Eastern Europe. A united Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals is emerging, as the European Community (EC) moves towards tighter integration and as cold war divisions are erased. East-West relations have never been better. Both the US and the USSR are drawing down their military forces abroad. Sino-Soviet normalisation is making progress. New global actors are coming on the scene.

It will be some time before the full implications of these changes become clear. Amid the uncertainties, there are many opportunities. Our foreign policy must adapt, without compromising the basic principles of our national security and identity.

We will strengthen existing ties of friendship and cooperation within ASEAN, and give more substance to bilateral relations. Our economic links with Indonesia and Malaysia are growing. We will continue to cooperate with them, especially in the economic development of Batam and Johor, and explore new areas of mutually beneficial economic activities.

The easing of great power relations has increased the pressure to settle regional conflicts. In Cambodia, Singapore believes that the best solution is an UN Interim Administration that will neutralise the political environment and allow free and fair elections to be held. A just Cambodian solution will open the way to better political and economic relations with the Indochinese countries.

The Asia-Pacific will continue to be a region of vibrant economic growth. Japan and the Newly Industrialising Economies (NIEs) will become economically and politically more important. We will work for greater common ground with the Asia-Pacific countries and, together with ASEAN, support the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

Western powers make a vital contribution to regional peace and prosperity, through their military presence and economic involvement. The EC is preoccupied with its internal developments and with Eastern Europe. The US is re-examining its regional deployments. We will encourage both to remain politically and economically engaged in the region. We have offered the US the use of some military facilities in Singapore, for their ships and aircraft.

The changes in Soviet policy under President Gorbachev have opened a new chapter in our relationship with the USSR. The visit of the Soviet Prime Minister was a watershed in our relationship. We can build up our links with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as their economies liberalise and open up.

Economic relations with China are well established. We expect to normalise diplomatic relations with China after Indonesia has done so.

Singapore will continue to build up ties with countries in South Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, Africa and the South Pacific.

New issues such as the environment, drugs and disease are now on the international agenda. Solving them will require multilateral efforts. Environmental problems pose a special challenge to all countries. We will do our part, within our means, as a responsible member of the international community.

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@