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Singapore Government

MEDIA RELEASE

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press Release

OPENING REMARKS BY PROFESSOR S JAYAKUMAR, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AT THE DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES ORGANISED BY THE INSTITUTE OF DEFENCE AND STRATEGIC STUDIES ON 30 JUNE 2000, MANDARIN SINGAPORE, 3.30PM.

Your Excellency Mr Amre Moussa,
Foreign Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

We are most honoured to have His Excellency Mr Amre Moussa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, to speak to us today. I first met Minister Moussa in the 1970s, when we were both representatives of our countries at the United Nations. Even then it was very clear to me and others who worked with him that Minister Moussa would rise to higher office. A lawyer by training, Minister Moussa joined the Egyptian Foreign Ministry in 1958, a year after graduation from the renowned Cairo University. His subsequent meteoric

rise through the ranks demonstrated not only his intellect and ability, but also his mastery of the complex foreign policy concerns of Egypt. Minister Moussa is a consummate diplomat and politician. His skillful steering of Egypt's external relations, especially in the past ten years, has earned both him and Egypt immense admiration from the international community.

2 When I paid an official visit to Egypt in 1996, Minister Moussa and his government extended to me the warmest hospitality and we had useful discussions. Therefore, on a personal note, I am happy to see him in Singapore.

3 We are honoured that Minister Moussa has agreed to speak to us today on an interesting and rapidly evolving issue - "The Middle East in a Changing World: An Egyptian Perspective".

4 Globalisation and the end of the Cold War have redefined the global strategic landscape and set a new paradigm for the Middle East peace process. Countries today are bound by a web of diverse economic relationships which form a complex overlay over traditional great power relations. What impact will the changing geopolitical landscape have on the long-standing conflict in the Middle East? Is a comprehensive peace within reach or does it continue to remain elusive? These are questions of concern not only to the Middle East, but also to us in Asia.

5 A stable and durable peace in the Middle East is important for international peace and security. Singapore has been following the events in the Middle East very closely. Recent developments give us reason to be hopeful. We remain committed to supporting a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council.

6 Over the years, Egypt has played a bold and constructive role in the Middle East peace process. In the Camp David Accords in 1978, Egypt, under the late President Anwar Sadat, swam against the political tide of the time by embarking on peace with Israel. The Camp David Accords laid the foundation for the subsequent peace process, including the breakthroughs in Madrid in 1991 and Oslo in 1993. It was a brave move on the part of Egypt, and one that involved

significant costs. Nevertheless, Egypt persisted in its efforts to restore peace and security in the region. If not for Egypt's courageous stance, the Middle East might be in a very different situation today. Therefore, I cannot think of a more qualified person than Minister Moussa to explain to us the intricacies of the Middle East.

Ladies and Gentlemen

7 I now have great pleasure to invite Minister Amre Moussa to address us.

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