



## PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP  
AND THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE,  
HIS EXCELLENCY MR GOH CHOK TONG  
JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE SHANGRI LA HOTEL,  
SINGAPORE, 17 JANUARY 1996**

### **E&OE PROOF COPY**

**GOH:** Yes, good morning ladies and gentlemen. Prime Minister Paul Keating and I had a good meeting this morning. We ranged over many subjects. We discussed developments in the region and also bilateral matters. On bilateral matters the principle point which I am making this morning is we will be issuing a Joint Declaration on a New Partnership.

Our relations are very good. We have been doing many things together. But we thought we can do more if we were to collect our thoughts, put them on a piece of paper and decide on the focus and where to focus in the years ahead.

The Joint Declaration will be issued to you and I will stop over here so you can ask questions on what we will be doing and on such matters that are of interest to you. You can address questions to Prime Minister Keating or myself.

**J:** Prime Minister Goh, can you elaborate on this New Partnership scheme. How will it benefit for Singapore, Australia and the region and what does it mean to them?

**GOH:** Well, basically, there are several pillars in this Joint Declaration - political, security, social, economic. On the economic side we would, of course, be encouraging Singaporeans to invest in Australia and Australia to trade more with Singapore. We would also be working together to invest in third countries like Indonesia, so it would benefit the Indonesians. And when Indonesia grows the economy will also affect Singapore and Australia in a positive way.

**J:** Mr Goh, this week you gave an interview with the suggestion that Australia might one day be a part of ASEAN. Do you suggest a

possible timetable for that whether 2010, 2020 and what sort of hurdles, what sort of benchmarks, does Australia have to meet in order to become a partner?

- GOH:** I would like to put my remarks in context. I was asked a question by The Australian Financial Review whether I foresee Australia joining ASEAN one day. My reaction was, it is an idea which is thinkable and indeed it is a thinkable idea of the horizon. But since this is an over the horizon idea, there is no timeframe in my mind, there is no immediate proposal, we did not discuss this, Australia has not indicated that it would wish to join ASEAN at this point of time, and neither have I discussed this with anybody else. So it is just something which is over the horizon.
- J:** In that same interview, Mr Goh, you also praised Mr Keating's leadership. In the coming election in Australia, would you be sorry to see Mr Keating go?
- PJK:** Well, of course, he would. That is why I am here.
- GOH:** As I have said in the interview, I mean in a personal sense, I would be sorry to see anybody go and I know Paul Keating very well and as I told the interviewer, we have got the same vision for the region, we have got the same stature, we have got the same height ....
- PJK:** You are a bit taller.
- GOH:** .... and I like him as a person very much.
- PJK:** And I like you too.
- GOH:** Thank you.
- J:** Mr Goh, the visit to Malaysia by Mr Keating was a very important one. You are used to the regional dialogue, the nuances with Malaysia, how do you assess the success or otherwise of that trip?
- GOH:** Well I read the reports in the newspapers that said it went very well and I am very pleased that the meeting of Prime Minister Keating went very well in Kuala Lumpur. It is important that bilateral relations between any country in the region are strong and certainly we want to see strong relations between Malaysia and Australia, Australia and Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, and so on. It is good for the region.
- J:** Prime Minister, do you feel there was some movement in the relationship over the last few days between Malaysia and Australia?

- GOH: Oh from what I have read, certainly there is movement.
- PJK: There is a fine calibration, you see, in our lot. They are into the millimetres of movement, you see.
- J: Mr Keating, can you tell us what the main message that you will be trying to get across in your Lecture this afternoon?
- PJK: Well, I think, rather than me try and anticipate that, it is a complex number of issues there - the bilateral relationship that exists between Australia and Singapore. The principle focus of it is the way in which the world has changed after the Cold War, regionalism and the role of regionalism in shaping world events and, of course, events within regions. It is a very great opportunity and I was very pleased to be asked and regard it as an honour to be able to speak at some length about these subjects.
- J: Mr Keating, can you comment on the Australian-Singapore New Partnership? What is your view?
- PJK: Well, I think, in relationships between longstanding friends - and we are longstanding friends - there is always, I think, some tendency to know where the other party is and take them for granted and believe you understand where they are. And, I think, it is a good thing that we stop, pause, occasionally and think about where we are going and write down what we want to do together. And the Prime Minister and I have had very great pleasure indeed in working together both bilaterally and multilaterally and the role that Singapore plays in this region, Australia's role here too, the things we have done together in multilateral bodies such as APEC, our role with ASEAN and the Regional Forum, these sorts of issues, these are all things which I think that Singapore and Australia have been able to do together. And just to recite what we have been doing in APEC, what we are seeking to do with AFTA and Australasia, our cooperation in the security issues of the Regional Forum, our reaffirmation of our commitment to the Five Power Defence Arrangements, these are important statements, I think, of where we stand on key issues and, I think, they are very important to the peoples of both of our countries. In terms of security, the Five Power Defence Arrangements - the reaffirmation of them - is important to Singaporeans, I think, as they are to Australians and the recital of our commitments on economic policy are important to our communities. And as the Prime Minister remarked in response to the question about my visit to Malaysia, Malaysia is also a party to the Five Power Defence Arrangements and the fact that we all have a shared commitment to the region, to its prosperity, to its peace, is an important demonstration of regionalism - the subject I am addressing some time this afternoon. So these are the issues which, I think, are of value to Singaporeans and to Australians.

- J: Mr Goh, during your visit to Australia in 1993 there was a fund that was set up by both Australia and Singapore to help the private sector invest in third countries. How does this New Partnership go further than that?
- GOH: Well, I think, on this Saturday, two parties - Australia and Singapore - will be signing another agreement which is on provision of training to personnel from third countries so that is in advance over what we decided to do when we were in Australia.
- J: Mr Goh, what is your view on Australia signing of the defence treaty with Indonesia?
- GOH: It is a good thing, we believe that security has been enhanced in the region with the signing of this agreement. We believe in a web of relations between countries, so there can be several tiers in relations and this represents another tier of relationships which will strengthen the overall regional security for the region. We welcome it.
- J: Mr Keating, is there a direct comparison, or any particular comparison, between the agreements signed with Indonesia last month and the agreement with Singapore?
- PJK: Well the agreement with Singapore is a recital and statement of our contemporary situation and outlook which encompasses some of our recent economic history and asserts and reaffirms our commitment to shared security arrangements in the area. Of course Australia had no such fundamental agreements with Indonesia and the fact that we now have one which goes to security issues, means - as the Prime Minister said when speaking about a web - it is a web of regional association and cooperation. And, therefore, the agreement with Indonesia does, I think, as the Prime Minister has said, it makes the whole area more secure. It was very much a declaration about the trust between Australia and Indonesia and that kind of declaration must give a very good signal to the whole region. So what we are doing in the declaration today is pausing and thinking and stating, again, the things that we have in common, the objectives we share, which are consistent with and completely compatible - the agreement, for instance, which Australia has made with Indonesia.
- J: Mr Keating, do you expect to sign similar agreements with other Asian nations, you've signed one with Tokyo etc? It has been a consistent theme of yours to develop a new vision. If so, what sort of countries would you see next on your list?

PJK: No, there isn't a list. I mean, there is a naturalness about all of these and they have come for natural and good reasons.

J: Mr Keating, you have always said that to go forward in Asia, Australia needs to be a republic. In that context, is the decision by the New South Wales Government to downgrade the role of Governor a good step?

PJK: Well, I think, we will deal with domestic, constitutional arrangements in New South Wales, when we are back in New South Wales.

J: Prime Minister, has Australia had to sacrifice its commitment to the pursuit of improved human rights and greater democracy to gain acceptance in this region?

PJK: No, I mean I am on the record on that on many occasions and the references have mostly been about Timor and I don't think anybody who is near the subject believes that Australia is likely to have any influence - beneficial, that is for the East Timorese - in a stand-off with Indonesia. And I made it clear in Australia and I make it clear again, we are not about to make the Australia/Indonesia relationship hostage to one issue. It is an issue I have discussed often with President Soeharto and it is one that needs to be dealt with in a framework. But, I think, Australia's democracy, its strength, its tolerance, are assets for its role in the region and they don't have to be compromised.

J: Mr Keating, in regard to the hostages taken by Chechen rebels in southern Russia [Inaudible]?

PJK: Oh, I don't think I can say anything new or profound about it. It is a European problem. It is a problem remote from this region. We feel the human tragedy very particularly and, I think, my own wish about this is that, you know, commonsense allows some of these problems to be solved.

J: Mr Keating, the recent purchase of Dreamworld by Singaporean investors has met with some opposition. Do you think this will discourage Singaporeans from investing in Australia and, in the light of this, will you continue to pursue your pro-Asia policy with the same vigour?

PJK: Oh yes. I don't think there is anything superstitious about Singaporean investors - not at all. And I think some hand wringing in the Australian financial press will not put them off - will not put them off.

ends



[For Immediate Release]

## MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS PRESS STATEMENT

### THE SINGAPORE-AUSTRALIA NEW PARTNERSHIP

Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating today announced the "Singapore-Australia New Partnership". The New Partnership, an initiative which was conceived during Mr Keating's visit to Singapore in March 1995, gives formal recognition to the cooperation which has grown between Australia and Singapore in recent years. Since March 1995, senior officials from Australia and Singapore have worked on the details of this New Partnership through a series of Joint Committee Meetings in Singapore and Canberra. Encompassing cooperation in political, security, economic and cultural matters, the New Partnership is testimony to the common view shared by both countries of the strategic environment, both within the region and globally. The Partnership will strengthen the excellent relations existing between both countries.

2 Both Singapore and Australia see the New Partnership as going beyond mutual benefit and as one having a positive impact on the region. Through the cooperation and engagement of both countries in regional and international fora such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, the World Trade Organisation and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Partnership would be a step towards the development of a community of comprehensive cooperation between the countries of Southeast Asia and Australia and New Zealand. On the economic front, the Partnership recognises that while enhanced economic cooperation will be of benefit to both countries, such cooperation could also benefit the region, in particular, joint investment in third countries. Both countries have also decided to collaborate on technical cooperation through joint training programmes for third countries.

3 As part of the Partnership, Australia and Singapore have decided to establish a Joint Ministerial Committee led by both countries' Foreign Ministers which will meet once every two years to review the progress of cooperation between both countries.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
17 JANUARY 1996

[Note: The text of the Joint Declaration on the Singapore-Australia New Partnership is attached]

## **A NEW PARTNERSHIP**

### **A JOINT DECLARATION BY THE PRIME MINISTERS OF AUSTRALIA AND SINGAPORE**

1 After our discussions in Singapore in March 1995, we asked our senior officials to conduct a comprehensive review of the relationship between Singapore and Australia.

2 By this Declaration, we now wish to give formal recognition to the new partnership that has grown up between Australia and Singapore in recent years, and to signal its future direction and purpose.

3 Australia and Singapore share a common view of the strategic environment, globally and in the Asia Pacific region. We are committed to achieving free and open international trade and investment. We both see the United States' presence and strategic engagement in the region as being of fundamental importance to the peace and prosperity of the region.

4 We also have substantial and growing bilateral links, especially in the commercial sector and through people-to-people ties. Our long-standing defence cooperation has reinforced regional stability.

5 These are the foundations of our new partnership.

6 The end of the Cold War, changes in strategic relations between great powers in the Asia Pacific region, the shift in the centre of gravity of global economic activity from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and the associated dynamism of East Asian economies, present new opportunities as well as uncertainties and challenges.

7 Our common objective is to ensure that we have in place international and regional institutions which underpin our shared political, economic and security interests.



8 For both Australia and Singapore, the significance of this partnership goes beyond its importance in their bilateral relationship. For Australia, it is a very important element in its engagement with the Southeast Asian region. For Singapore, it is a recognition of the value it places on Australia's role in regional affairs.

9 Our partnership will give further impetus to the development of a community of comprehensive cooperation between the countries of Southeast Asia and Australia and New Zealand.

10 To sustain this new partnership, and to build on its objectives, Australia and Singapore accordingly declare:

- We are committed to strengthening APEC, recognising its status as the premier institution in the Asia Pacific region. We are determined to achieve the practical fulfilment and implementation of the Bogor Declaration and its time-table.
- We will work together to see that APEC liberalisation is matched by global trade liberalisation. We will cooperate towards augmenting the WTO's role, starting with the lead up to Singapore's hosting of the 1996 WTO Ministerial Meeting.
- We will cooperate in forging linkages between AFTA and CER.
- We will cooperate to ensure the success of the ASEAN Regional Forum, the Asia Pacific's regional security organisation.
- We affirm our shared commitment to the Five Power Defence Arrangements. The active commitment of all members will ensure its continuing role as a credible element in the security architecture of the region.
- We welcome the extensive broadening of bilateral defence cooperation in the last five years. Noting the benefits to Australian industry which are expected to

follow from the training of Singapore Armed Forces in Australia, we agree also to explore further the prospects for long-term defence industry cooperation.

- We recognise that enhanced economic cooperation is in our mutual interest, and could be of benefit to the region. Complementarities in our resource endowments, capital availability and technology usage offer real scope for cooperative ventures. To this end, we agree that:
  - \* Our commitment to economic cooperation embraces both bilateral opportunities and joint projects that benefit third countries in the region. Our aim is to enhance and diversify bilateral trade and investment and joint investment in third countries.
  - \* The role of our Governments is primarily to facilitate partnerships between Australian and Singapore companies which meet these criteria. The process, already underway, of drawing each other's attention to specific investment opportunities will continue.
  - \* Our collaboration may include technical cooperation through joint training programmes with third countries.
  - \* Economic cooperation also includes collaboration in research and development in areas where both countries have compatible technological capabilities, where we can add value by working together, and where there are prospects for shared commercial outcomes.
- We will encourage the Singapore Australia Business Alliance Forum's work in identifying and implementing opportunities that meet the above criteria.
- We will work to improve dialogue and contact between our Government agencies in the economic and financial areas. Important issues of public policy which would

benefit from an enhanced dialogue include: public finance, including budget management issues; superannuation and retirement income systems; and competition policy.

- We are committed to promoting mutual understanding through expanded cultural exchanges and more people-to-people links. In this way we contribute to a broader sense of community and cooperation in a region of cultural diversity.

11 We agree to establish a Joint Ministerial Committee to be led by our respective Foreign Ministers. The Committee will meet once every two years and each side would be represented by at least three Ministers reflecting the range of bilateral cooperation.

17 JANUARY 1996  
SINGAPORE