



*Prime Minister
Singapore*

6 May 2025

Mr Teo Chee Hean
Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security

Dear *Chee Hean,*

As you step down from Cabinet and politics, I thank you for your lifetime of service to Singapore. Your contributions, particularly in the areas of defence, climate action, diplomacy and security, have left an indelible mark on our nation.

You dedicated your entire 53-year career to safeguarding and advancing the interests of Singapore and Singaporeans. You started out as a navy officer in 1972 and rose through the ranks, eventually leaving the armed forces as Chief of Navy in 1992 to enter politics, and to serve Singapore and Singaporeans in a different capacity.

This dedication to the nation continued throughout your political career, 16 years of which were spent at the Ministry of Defence in various capacities. As Minister for Defence from 2003 to 2011, your visionary leadership was pivotal to the 3rd Generation transformation of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF). The acquisition of advanced equipment for land, sea and air combat, and your foresight in creating an integrated and networked force, enabled our servicemen and servicewomen to fight more effectively. Because of these efforts, the SAF is now equipped with the cutting-edge capabilities it needs to meet evolving security challenges.

You also led the SAF to make operational deployments which were beneficial for Singapore's security. In the aftermath of the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami, the SAF mounted Operation Flying Eagle to provide much-needed aid to Indonesia and Thailand. This remains the largest Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operation undertaken by the SAF. Under your watch, the SAF also contributed to peace support operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Gulf of Aden; this was our way of supporting peace and security in regions of the world which have an impact on Singapore.

Beyond strengthening military capabilities, you fostered strong ties with our defence partners. You worked with counterparts to establish the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM)-Plus in 2010, which has become a major platform for security cooperation and dialogue between ASEAN member states and the eight partner countries. You also played a key role in developing the Shangri-La Dialogue into the premier defence forum for the Asia-Pacific.

When you went to the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2011, you began transforming the Home Team, accelerating the integration of technology to speed up and strengthen police and civil defence responses. You also enhanced the capacity of our Home Team through community partnerships, tapping on Singaporeans as ears and eyes on the ground to help fight crime, to counter radicalisation and terrorism, and to be first responders in fire and medical emergencies. You kept abreast of the scourge of cyberattacks and cybercrimes by setting up the Singapore Police Force's Cybercrime Command. In 2011, you were also appointed Coordinating Minister for National Security, taking on the critical task of ensuring that Singapore's external and domestic security strategies are well-integrated and forward-looking. You led the work to establish the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore (CSA), which provided us with a vital capability to deal with cyber threats. You set the direction for MHA and MINDEF, as well as our intelligence agencies to work in closer collaboration.

Beyond defence and security, you made a lasting impact on generations of young Singaporeans. As Minister for Education, you drove bold and necessary reforms to prepare Singapore for a knowledge-based economy. One major shift was to update the primary, secondary and junior college curricula to better develop thinking, communication and process skills. You steered reviews of the Mother Tongue Languages curriculum, leading to the introduction of new syllabuses to better suit the needs of our students. You also initiated single-session primary schools and freed up space and time for students to participate in a wider range of co-curricular and enrichment activities – enhancing not just academic outcomes, but also students' affective, social and physical development.

As Deputy Prime Minister and later as Senior Minister, you brought your wealth of experience and sharp strategic mind to bear on critical national issues. You never hesitated to speak your mind and voice different views in Cabinet, making our discussions more robust. You chaired multiple committees on complex and cross-cutting matters, including on population matters and the existential issue of climate change. On the latter, you set the direction for our agencies to take a coordinated Whole of Government approach, balancing tough trade-offs to formulate practical decarbonisation and net-zero goals.

You represented Singapore with distinction on the global stage, furthering Singapore's relations with key partners. As Singapore's Co-Chair of the Joint Council for Bilateral Cooperation with China, you oversaw the establishment of our third Government-to-Government project, the Chongqing Connectivity Initiative. You were instrumental in the establishment of the Singapore-China Forum on Leadership and the Singapore-China Social Governance Forum, which have broadened bilateral cooperation and provided platforms for the younger generation of leaders on both sides to build strong ties. With Indonesia, you guided sensitive negotiations that successfully concluded three landmark agreements – the Flight Information Region Agreement, the Extradition Treaty, and the Defence Cooperation Agreement – resolving three complex, long-standing bilateral issues. You helped Singapore to stand tall in the world, and created space and opportunities for our country internationally.

You also led work on important and difficult issues with rigour and thoughtfulness. This included implementing the recommendations of the Constitutional Commission to review specific aspects of the Elected Presidency, and taking the related Constitutional amendments through in Parliament. Most recently, you oversaw the review of the disclosure of full NRIC numbers in ACRA's BizFile service, delivering a thorough, and definitive account in Parliament on what went wrong and how we could do better. You approached each of these demanding assignments with thoroughness and clarity, never hesitating to hold individuals accountable when necessary, and making sure that the Government will always have the moral courage and conviction to do the right thing, and to do right by Singapore.

Your leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic was invaluable and exemplary. At the national level, you led efforts to manage the outbreak in the migrant worker dormitories – responding swiftly and steadily to an urgent and potentially dangerous crisis. You were calm and composed under pressure, and you inspired the civil servants and SAF officers who worked with you during those difficult days. In the community, you ensured residents remained connected through online town halls and community forums, despite the restrictions on physical gatherings. Your efforts to preserve a sense of community during those challenging times were deeply felt and appreciated by residents.

On the ground, you have tirelessly served your residents for over three decades. You were first elected in the 1992 Marine Parade GRC by-election as a member of then-Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong's team, before moving to contest in Pasir Ris GRC during the 1997 general election. You have been re-elected there five times since, a clear testament to your residents' trust in you.

As the steadfast anchor for the Pasir Ris-Punggol team, you provided unwavering stability and leadership. Your residents appreciate your proactive, practical and thoughtful approach to ground issues – addressing their concerns, improving their lives, and creating a strong sense of community. They saw the benefits of impactful developments, such as the opening of facilities like Pasir Ris Mall and Pasir Ris Polyclinic, as well as social schemes which showed that they were not alone, such as the Pasir Ris-Punggol Career Marketplace done in partnership with the NTUC.

You have been a trusted mentor to new PAP MPs, instilling in them your deep sense of duty and service. Your dedication to nurturing future leaders, both within your GRC team and the wider Party, speaks to your belief in long-term leadership renewal. As First Assistant Secretary General of the PAP in 2015, you played a key role in the Party's leadership transition and charting its future direction.

When I entered politics in 2011, you were already a seasoned leader. I have benefitted greatly from your generous guidance and wise counsel. If I can take Singapore forward from here, it is only because earlier generations of leaders like you have worked hard to safeguard our future. My team and I will do our utmost to continue your ethos – protecting what we have built, and bringing Singapore onward and upward.

Once again, my deepest appreciation for your unwavering service and dedication to our nation and our people. I wish you and your family every happiness and fulfilment in your next phase of life.

Yours *Sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lawrence Wong', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lawrence Wong