

SINGAPORE PERSPECTIVES2015

Choices

Monday, 26 January 2015
Fairmont Ballroom, Raffles City Convention Centre

PROGRAMME

(as at 20 Jan 2015)

7.45 am – 8.30 am

Registration

8.30 am – 8.50 am

Opening Remarks

Mr Janadas Devan
Director
Institute of Policy Studies

8.50 am – 9.00 am

Video Presentation IPS Study on Perceptions of Singapore's History – Part 1

A video presentation of IPS' study on historical narratives which Singaporeans identify as integral to the Singapore Story. What are the historical events that are most known and most important to Singaporeans? The first segment of the video presents key findings from the study.

9.00 am – 10.30 am

PANEL I Sovereignty

The merger between Singapore and the Federation of Malaya in 1963 was short-lived. Singapore's separation from the Federation in August 1965 posed daunting challenges on various fronts for the newly independent city-state. This panel will first recount the circumstances that led the founding generation to make the choices they made. Could they have made different choices? What paths did they not take? And where might they have led to?

Speakers at this panel will consider the future and ask: What is Singapore's future as a sovereign state, especially in light of the myriad challenges of globalisation? Would Singapore need to be part of a larger entity in order to ride the waves of change the future will bring? What entity might that be and how would this affect our sovereignty?

Chairperson

Professor Tan Tai Yong
Executive Vice President (Academic Affairs)
Yale-NUS College
and
Director
Institute of South Asian Studies
National University of Singapore
and
Nominated Member of Parliament

Speakers

Ambassador Bilahari Kausikan
Ambassador-at-Large &
Policy Adviser
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Professor Evelyn Goh
Shedden Professor of Strategic Policy Studies
School of International, Political & Strategic Studies
ANU College of Asia & the Pacific
The Australian National University

Question and Answer Session

10.30 am – 11.00 am

Tea Break

11.00 am – 11:10 am

Video Presentation

IPS Study on Perceptions of Singapore's History – Part 2

The second segment of the video showcases three themes which resonate most strongly with respondents – Nation Building, Differences and National Resilience. Focus group discussions with Singaporeans from different generations shed light on how and why they identified certain historical events as influential and which aspects of Singapore's history inspire them.

11.10 am – 12.40 pm

PANEL II Global City

Separation from Malaysia in 1965 disrupted Singapore's original hopes for a common market with the Federation. Singapore urgently needed a strategy to make up for the loss of a vital hinterland and chose to make the global market the linchpin of her economy. This panel will consider, among other things, how the Singapore Story would have turned out if she had taken a different path of economic development. Would there have been a Singapore Story if the founding generation had chosen a path other than that of becoming a global city?

Discussions at this panel will also consider the effects that changing demographics, growing income inequality, resource constraints, the emergence of neighbouring mega-cities, and technological disruptions might have on Singapore's economic model. Would the "global city" model continue to be sustainable? If not, what other model might take its place? If there is no alternative, how might the model be modified to take into account new challenges?

Chairperson

Dr Lee Soo Ann
Senior Fellow
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy &
Department of Economics
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
National University of Singapore

Speakers

Professor Tan Kong Yam
Division of Economics
School of Humanities and Social Sciences
College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences
Nanyang Technological University
and
Co-Director
Asia Competitiveness Institute
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy
National University of Singapore

Professor Linda Lim
Professor of Strategy
Stephen M. Ross School of Business
University of Michigan

Question and Answer Session

12.40 pm – 1.45 pm

Lunch

1.45 pm – 3.15 pm

DEBATE Pragmatism

The immediate concern after independence was to secure the livelihoods of all Singaporeans. To achieve this, the government embarked on a pragmatic strategy to develop Singapore into a thriving global economy.

Today, Singapore has achieved a high standard of living in terms of its GDP. However, increasing economic volatility and stagnating income for significant segments of the workforce have fuelled unhappiness and frustration amongst the electorate. Consequently, some have argued that Singapore must now look beyond material wealth and focus on the well-being of its citizens.

How valid is this argument that Singapore must move beyond traditional measures of “success” and focus more on the quality of life that its citizens experience? Should the government modify its social compact with the people in light of changing aspirations and increasing pluralism in society? Is pragmatism necessarily soulless? Can man live by bread alone? And can the soul thrive without bread?

This panel will approach these questions by debating the motion:

“This Conference resolves that pragmatism remains important and should be retained as our governing philosophy.”

Chairperson

Ms Debra Soon
Head
News Segment
MediaCorp Pte Ltd

Proposers

Professor Kishore Mahbubani
Dean and Professor in the Practice of Public Policy
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy
National University of Singapore

Mr Tong Yee
Director
The Thought Collective

Opposers

Mr Vikram Khanna
Associate Editor
The Business Times
Singapore Press Holdings Ltd

Associate Professor Eugene Tan
Associate Professor of Law
School of Law &
Co-Director
SMU Centre for Scholars’ Development
Singapore Management University

Question and Answer Session

3.15 pm – 3.45 pm

Tea Break

3.45 pm – 5.00 pm

PANEL III
Inter-Generational Ministerial Dialogue with Guests of Honour

Mr Teo Chee Hean
Deputy Prime Minister
Coordinating Minister for National Security
and
Minister for Home Affairs

Mr Chan Chun Sing
Minister for Social and Family Development
and
Second Minister for Defence

Chairperson

Mr Janadas Devan

Question and Answer Session

5.00 pm

End of Conference

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