

REMARKS BY JANADAS DEVAN, IPS DIRECTOR

Minister Chan Chun Sing,

Our 13th S R Nathan Fellow, Professor Joseph Liow,

Distinguished guests,

Welcome to the launch of *Navigating Uncertainty: Our Region in an Age of Flux*, a culmination of the three lectures Prof Liow gave us as our 13th S R Nathan Fellow. Thank you, Minister Chan Chun Sing for agreeing to launch this book.

Prof Liow's lectures offered us valuable perspectives on current tides of geopolitical tensions — from the rise of China against the current US-influenced — if not US-led — global order to the impact of the Israel-Hamas conflict on our region. He advised Singapore should "avoid casting US-China competition in binary terms" and noted that Singapore should make itself relevant to both America's as well as China's strategic, economic, and commercial interests, "so that neither would want to make us choose".

Prof Liow brought the discussion closer to home in his final lecture which focussed on the impact of global forces on Singapore as well as our immediate neighbours. His insights on how the Israel-Hamas conflict as well as the rise of China's influence has interacted with identity politics in the region were particularly insightful and I would urge all of you to read the last chapter.

The S R Nathan Fellowship for the Study of Singapore was named to honour our 6th President. Since its inception in 2014, we have had 14 S R Nathan Fellows. Mr Tan Chong Meng, our 14th, recently concluded his lecture series, *Exploring Global Trade and Singapore's Place as a World Connector*. His book will be launched early next year. We asked both Prof Liow and Mr Tan — consciously and deliberately — to specifically showcase different perspectives on how Singapore could position itself amidst the evolving geopolitical as well as geo-economic scene.

Our 15th Fellow will be Professor Lily Kong, President of Singapore Management University. She has been asked to speak about the portentous topic of the idea of the university in Singapore. I look forward to that. Beyond Prof Kong, we have lined up, among others, Mr Piyush Gupta, Mr Philip Yeo, and Dr Shawn Lum.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Prof Liow for his outstanding contributions to the S R Nathan Fellowship, and for his efforts in presenting a nuanced analysis of a very complex subject. It is actually very difficult to speak simply but intelligently and expertly to a broad audience on such matters. I thought Prof Liow did it admirably — continuing in the tradition established by earlier S R Nathan Fellows, — some of whom are here — including the likes of Professor Wang Gungwu and Professor Chan Heng Chee. I think this is S R Nathan Fellowship's biggest contribution to Singapore: It is a series that — I think — has raised the level of discourse on various issues of importance to Singaporeans, and I hope that we will continue to do so.

Thank you very much for attending this launch.