

Thank you all, Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, President of NUS, Dean of LKY School, our Special Advisor, Professor Tommy Koh, Noeleen, distinguished guests.

Welcome to the launch of Singapore in Multilateral Governance, Securing Our Future. And thank you Minister for agreeing to launch Noeleen's book.

I must first begin by confessing my personal interest. There is some nepotism involved here. I have known Noeleen for 55 years since I was 15 or so. She was almost a surrogate daughter of my parents.

She first sailed into our lives as an impossibly beautiful young woman, as the great girlfriend- and later fiancé and then wife of a firebrand Malaysian politician Fan Yew Teng of the Democratic Action Party.

By that time when we first met her, she had already become politically engaged herself, an activist in the University of Singapore's Democratic Socialist Club.

She had first intended to read literature and drama at University of Singapore, but she was waylaid by one Loo Choon Yong, who turned her interest to politics and sociology. Noeleen in turn recruited others, including Tan Lian Choo, and this unholy group lived together in a house in Barbary Walk. One Ho Kwon Ping later joined them. Fortunately, he was the only one among them who managed to get himself arrested briefly. Choon Yong expected to be arrested but the Singapore government wisely refrained from obliging.

Some of you will remember that the old guard of the PAP around that time in the early 1970s produced a book entitled Socialism That Works. I personally think that it might have been better titled Socialism That Is a Work in Progress for the work can never be finished.

Whatever one might say of Singapore as a whole, we can nevertheless say that socialism undoubtedly worked for Messrs Loo Choon Yong, Ho Kwon Ping, and in a different way for Dr Noeleen Heyzer.

She is one of the few people from that era and milieu who retained her ideals even as she became a member of the establishment. In her case, the international establishment.

Noeleen is a scholar, but she's also an activist. She's a thinker, but she's also a doer. Thought for her has been inseparable from action. She's a scholar activist, you might say a thinker doer, and on a very large scale.

She gave her three lectures back in 2021, three lectures in the S R Nathan Fellowship series. But she could not hold a book launch back then as she was still at that point appointed the UN Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar that same year, around the same time as her lectures. Now that she has completed her 18-month tenure, we can finally celebrate the launch of her book with every one of you here.

Her series of lectures brought us through Singapore's past, present, and future engagement, and experience with multilateral governance. As the only island city-state in the world, functioning island city-state, participating in multilateral governance was pivotal in our journey towards a first world nation. Noeleen has advised that Singapore should become an epicentre of multilateralism by establishing ourselves as a multilateral hub for a whole host of things, global public health, a digital hub for cyber security and a wealth management hub too.

The S R Nathan Fellowship will continue to feature distinguished thinkers, doers and leaders. Professor Joseph Liow, our 13th S R Nathan Fellow, just recently completed his lecture series on the global and regional tension Singapore has to navigate. His book will be launched in July this year.

Following him, we welcome Tan Chong Meng, CEO of PSA International, as our 14th S R Nathan Fellow. His upcoming lecture series, *Exploring Global Trade and Singapore's Place as a World Connector* will begin next month.

Our 15th Fellow will be Professor Lily Kong, President of Singapore Management University (SMU) who will provide an updated account for Singapore of the idea of a university.

But finally, thank you Noeleen for enriching our understanding of the crucial role of multilateral governance in Singapore's past and the pivotal place it might have in our future.

But thank you above all for being such a wonderful example of what it means to be an engaged intellectual. Many of the people of our generation all talked in very grand terms about being engaged and an intellectual in the public sphere, but very few of us put it into action systematically throughout their lives, and you were one of the few. Thank you so much.