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**OPENING SPEECH BY SENIOR MINISTER/COORDINATING  
MINISTER FOR NATIONAL SECURITY PROF S JAYAKUMAR AT  
THE 2009 NATIONAL SECURITY DIALOGUE WITH THE BUSINESS  
COMMUNITY ON 4 AUG 09 (TUES), 9.10AM AT ORCHARD HOTEL  
GRAND BALLROOM**

Senior Minister of State, Assoc Prof Ho Peng Kee, Minister of State, Mr Lee Yi Shyan, Chairman, Singapore Business Federation (SBF) Mr Tony Chew, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

**INTRODUCTION**

1. I am glad to see such an excellent turnout at National Security Dialogue, organised by the Singapore Business Federation (SBF), and supported by the National Security Coordination Secretariat (NSCS) and the Singapore Police Force (SPF).

2. I have been holding these dialogues with the business community for many years, because of one simple but important reason: you and your organisations play a crucial role in our National Security efforts. Previous participants have found these dialogues useful in exchanging insights, raising overall awareness and our ability to deal with security-related issues.

3. This year, speakers from both the government and the private sector will update you on security issues and to discuss best practices in contingency planning and crisis management. Today we will have an SPF presentation to showcase Singapore private and public sector agencies' preparedness to deal with coordinated terrorist attacks. There will also be a sharing on the November 2008 Mumbai attacks.

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## **PERSISTENT & EVOLVING THREAT**

4. Sadly, we are not short of horrific terrorist attacks to serve as reminders that the threat of terrorism is indeed real. Trans-national terrorist groups have shown persistence and adaptability in their efforts to inflict harm not just in terms of human casualties, but also in disrupting a society's way of life.

5. The multiple attacks across India's financial capital Mumbai last year vividly showed how terrorists have focused their attention on soft, civilian targets that include hotels, restaurants and public areas. Commercial infrastructure and iconic buildings cannot be ruled out as potential targets for those wanting to create chaos and capture media attention to magnify their cause. Recent terrorist attacks in Pakistan have shown that even venues like mosques and national sports events like cricket will not be spared.

6. In our region, security authorities have achieved significant success in arresting terror suspects and disrupting plots. Nevertheless, despite the best efforts of all, the threat persists and is real as we all were reminded by the bombings of Ritz-Carlton and JW Marriot hotels in Jakarta less than three weeks ago. Indeed, preliminary reports that the terrorists could have assembled the bombs in the hotel rooms show that we are dealing with terrorists who constantly change and evolve their methods. We have no choice but to remain vigilant so long as terrorism remains a real and persistent threat.

## **EXERCISE NORTHSTAR VII**

7. Last month, we conducted a multi-agency exercise, Exercise Northstar VII, to prepare for Mumbai-like attacks in Singapore. The exercise simulated coordinated terrorist attacks on multiple sites in Singapore by several teams of terrorists coming in from the sea.

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8. That exercise tested the operational readiness of Singapore's counter-terrorism units as well as emergency forces' management of mass casualties at multiple sites. Significantly, Northstar VII also tested hotels', retail malls', public transport companies' and media's emergency responses. More than 2,000 participants from 15 agencies from the public and private sectors took part in this exercise. Together they mounted a response to various scenarios ranging from violent rampages to consequence management at a train station, shopping malls and hotels.

9. Such exercises enable agencies to review and update their existing security and contingency processes. Northstar VII also provided an opportunity for the private stakeholders to enhance their Crisis Management Capabilities. One of the key outcomes was demonstrating that the responding agencies are ready. This was an effort that showed our collective determination to prevail over the threat of trans-national terrorism. The close coordination displayed by all agencies was a particular highlight and it bolsters confidence in their ability to cope with such a situation if it were to happen here.

### **ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

10. The Government will continue to ensure that the required infrastructure and measures for needed to counter terrorism are put in place to protect Singapore and our people. However, countering terrorism cannot be the effort of the government alone. It has to be a collective effort by everyone. In this regard, the private sector's involvement and contribution are vital towards strengthening our security.

11. The Government cannot anticipate and plan for all threats and scenarios. As business leaders, you would instinctively understand the concept of risks and

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the imperative to manage them. You have to be prepared for unexpected events which can disrupt your business operations. This could necessitate making plans to protect yourself against disruptions, be it terrorist attacks, pandemics or other emergency situations. In so doing, you ensure that your core business functions remain intact.

12. We have established several initiatives to ensure sustainable improvements in businesses' level of preparedness. One of them is the Safety and Security Watch Group, or SSWG, through which Police works with the commercial sector on threat assessment and security audit. SSWG adopts a geographical approach to threat mitigation, for example through resource pooling and coordination of responses. Today, we will see the presentation of the annual National Safety and Security Watch Group Awards, an acknowledgement of the good work by our business partners for putting in place security measures.

13. As business leaders, you would also appreciate that emergency response plans must be sustained over the long-term. But, individual businesses need not shoulder this responsibility alone. They can share the burden with the respective SSWGs. The SSWG exhibition held concurrently with this event would provide you with the opportunity to pick up lessons and tips on the cluster approach in emergency response taken by SSWGs.

14. Other initiatives exist should businesses need further support from the government. One example is Business Continuity Management (BCM). As I had announced in November last year, in encouraging businesses to adopt BCM, the government would provide financial incentives to defray the cost of BCM-implementation. I encourage companies, who have not already done so, to take

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advantage of the assistance provided and strive to achieve adoption of BCM. I would also urge you to evaluate your suppliers' readiness for contingencies. Through this way, we will be able to reinforce our resilience.

### **PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP**

15. As an old Middle Eastern proverb states – “A cord of three strands is not easily broken”. Applied in our context, a strong partnership between the government, the private sector and the general public will help build a resilient Singapore which can better withstand the threats and challenges that come our way.

16. An example of the public-private partnership in security is where the Singapore Hotel Association, together with SPRING Singapore, SPF, National Crime Prevention Council and Singapore Tourism Board, are collaborating to develop a new Singapore Standard for Hotel Security. This new standard, to be launched later this month at the Hotel Security Conference 2009, will help bolster Singapore's reputation as a secure business and tourism destination.

17. Much of the private sector has also taken steps to ensure that its security personnel are well-trained and equipped to tackle any likely crisis. The studies on terrorist incidents from Mumbai to Pakistan and Jakarta have shown the critical role played by first responders who can significantly mitigate the damage caused in a terrorist attack. The more prepared the front-line officer, whether he is a policeman, train station supervisor or other personnel, the more effective he would be in preventing or mitigating the full impact of an attack.

18. The security personnel at the hotels can also play critical roles in protecting and rescuing some of the hostages.

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19. To encourage and help train private sector security personnel, the SPF implemented Project Guardian. Among other things, Project Guardian can provide private security personnel with skills training on key emergency roles to enhance their capability to deal with crisis. These better trained private security personnel would then be able to better assist the police in emergency and crisis situations. During Exercise Northstar VII, more than 60 employees and security personnel from the participating hotels and businesses benefited from the Project Guardian training and responded to the crisis scenario with greater confidence and effectiveness.

20. Beyond trans-national terrorism, other non-traditional security threats can emerge in the form of pandemics or impact from climate change. The H1N1 episode is not an aberration, but a foretaste of the types of complex challenges which the government, the people and the private sector will have to jointly tackle in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Trans-national terrorism and the new threats such as pandemics are likely to be long-term concerns. We can meet these challenges by sustainable, collective efforts that involve the government, the private sector and the general public.

#### **GUARD AGAINST FATIGUE AND COMPLACENCY**

21. Terrorists will strike in both good and bad times. Just as an eerie calm can precede a tsunami, peace and quietness over a few years should not lull us into believing that it means the absence of risks. While we cannot totally eliminate risks, we must find ways to manage it. We must therefore get used to risk management and vigilance as a way of life. The danger is that security fatigue and complacency usually increase during prolonged lull periods when there is no incident. The challenge is how to sustain the message of getting respective stakeholders to take counter-terrorism efforts seriously.

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22. The bombings of the two hotels in Jakarta on 17 Jul remind us of how terrorism remains a constant threat, especially when we least expect attacks to occur. While we should not overreact or be unduly alarmed, we must also not be complacent but remain alert and be prepared. Terrorism is an asymmetrical threat that will be with us for a long time and investment in security will have to be a sustained long-term commitment.

23. There is also the danger that our attention could be crowded out by other concerns, such as the global economic slowdown. The economic uncertainty and consequent pressures on the bottom line may conspire to divert attention and resources from security priorities.

24. We should however recognise that security is an investment that will pay dividends long into the future, and it could be part of the competitive advantage for individual businesses and Singapore as a whole. Already, security is a key factor in the choice of location for international events arising from terrorism concerns. Also, as travellers become more security conscious, they will look for destinations and hotels that have good record of security. Meanwhile, your BCM efforts will boost the already strong quality reputation that Singapore companies enjoy beyond our shores and help project the image of resilience and dependability in these trying times.

## **CONCLUSION**

25. As partners with the government in building a secure and prosperous Singapore, I urge you to view security as an integral component of business management. By working together, we can achieve and sustain our collective security. I look forward to hearing your ideas on how we can make this partnership a success. Thank you.