

**SPEECH BY INTELLECTUAL PURSUIT SUB-COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON, MR JEFFREY KHOO  
AT THE NUSS COMMENTARY APPRECIATION AND DIALOGUE  
– THE LITTLE NATION THAT CAN: SINGAPORE’S FOREIGN RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY  
27 MARCH 2018, TUESDAY  
7PM AT KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE**

**1. Address the audience**

Good evening Ambassador-at-Large, Professor Tommy Koh, NUSS Honorary Member Professor Wang Gung Wu , Panel Speakers Mr K. Kesavapany, Ms Lee Huay Leng, Esteemed Contributors of NUSS Commentary, Distinguished guests, Fellow NUSS Members and friends.

NUSS is specially honoured this evening, to have the presence of Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Diplomats from 20 Nations attending this dialogue.

A very warm welcome and thank you for joining us for the NUSS Commentary Appreciation and Dialogue

I would like to extend my appreciation and thanks to our distinguished panel of speakers for consenting to speak to our Members and guests this evening.

**2. About the Commentary Appreciation and Dialogue Session**

The Commentary Dialogue is part of a series of Dialogue sessions regularly organised by NUSS to encourage intellectual discourse among our Members and contribute towards the development of Singapore’s political and intellectual scene.

Unlike the traditional Dialogues, the Commentary Dialogue is unique in that it seeks to bring to life the views shared by well-regarded diplomats and topic experts

And in so doing, promote a healthy discussion of issues significant and relevant to Singapore

Over the years, we were privileged to have Ambassadors, Academics, Writers and Expert Researchers to share their expertise and opinions at our Commentary Dialogues

This evening, we will be discussing our latest publication, Commentary Volume 26, titled **“The Little Nation That Can: Singapore’s Foreign Relations and Diplomacy”**.

Singapore’s economic success and independence is attributed to its effective diplomacy and establishment of strong relations with other nations.

In an increasingly uncertain world filled with economic uncertainties and political transition, how Singapore chooses to navigate through this period would determine the nation’s success in the decades to come.

### **3. Introduce the session**

Here to join us on the panel today are three topic experts who have contributed to the Commentary.

#### **Professor Tommy Koh**

Firstly, Professor Tommy Koh, who is Ambassador-At-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NUSS Advisory Board Member. Prof Koh currently wears many hats, holding the position of

- Special Adviser to the Institute of Policy Studies
- Chairman of the Governing Board of the Centre for International Law
- Chairman of the International Advisory Panel of the Asia Research Institute among others.

Notably, Prof Koh was first appointed to represent a young Singapore as its Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York in July 1968

He has won several awards recognising his contributions to Singapore, most notably the Order of Nila Utama (First Class) in 2008.

This year coincidentally marks his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the public service. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Prof Koh on this milestone and thank him for his many contributions towards Singapore and for being an inspiration to us.

#### **Ms Lee Huay Leng**

Our panel speakers includes Ms Lee Huay Leng, Head of the Chinese Media Group of Singapore Press Holdings.

Ms Lee majors in Chinese Studies and holds a Master Degree in Southeast Asian Studies.

She also serves as a member of Public Transport Council and the Founders' Memorial Committee, and is a Governor of Singapore International Foundation.

#### **Mr K. Kesavapany**

Last but not least, we have Mr K. Kesavapany, who currently serves as President of the Singapore Indian Association and is also a Governor of Singapore International Foundation.

Mr Kesavapany was the former High Commissioner of Singapore to Malaysia from 1997 to 2002.

Please also allow me to take this opportunity to thank the editor of this year's Commentary , Dr Gillian Koh, who has graciously accepted our invitation to moderate this evening's session.

Dr Koh is the Deputy Director (Research) at the Institute of Policy Studies at the National University of Singapore. She is also an NUS alumna as well as a member of NUSS.

Tonight, our panel of topic experts will discuss how a small nation like Singapore continues to thrive as a global city in a rapidly changing world.

Let me end with a quote from our founding Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew:

"A nation is great not only by its size alone. It is the will, the cohesion, the stamina, the discipline of their leaders which ensure it an honorable place in history."

I am confident that all of us will benefit greatly from the sharing by our panel of speakers and I will like to wish you all a pleasant evening ahead.

Thank you.