

**58TH WAR MEMORIAL SERVICE IN COMMEMORATION OF THE
CIVILIAN VICTIMS OF THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION AND
TOTAL DEFENCE DAY COMMEMORATION 2025
SPEECH BY SCCCI PRESIDENT KHO CHOON KENG
15 FEBRUARY 2025
WAR MEMORIAL PARK ALONG BEACH ROAD**

Mr Teo Chee Hean, Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for
National Security,
Your Excellencies,
SAF Representatives, Religious Leaders,
Teachers and Students, Distinguished Guests,

A very good morning to all of you.

1. Every year without fail, the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCCI) holds the War Memorial Service on the 15th of February, to honour and remember the civilians who passed away during the Japanese Occupation in Singapore. On behalf of SCCCI, I thank everyone for attending this War Memorial Service today.
2. The pain of the war is deeply etched in Singapore's history and serves as an important reminder that we must cherish the peace that we have and safeguard Singapore's security and sovereignty. As Singapore celebrates 60 years of independence, we reflect on how far we have come over the last six decades. It is through our strong foundation and founding principles, as well as the sacrifices of our forefathers, that we have built a harmonious, inclusive, and resilient multicultural society. As Singaporeans, we must cherish and be grateful for what we have. At the same time, we must be even more vigilant to safeguard the peace, prosperity and harmony of our homeland!
3. In addition to the National Education Talks attended by more than 100 students in the past years, SCCCI is specially organising the "Eternal Vigilance: SCCCI Leaning Journey" today. After this War Memorial Service, our docents will lead 120 students on a visit to three national monuments – the Civilian War Memorial, the Cenotaph and Lim Bo Seng Memorial. Through this learning

journey, we hope to deepen young people's interest and understanding of Singapore's history, strengthen their appreciation of national defence and the importance of staying vigilant, to instil a strong sense of civic responsibility, social unity, resilience and patriotism.

4. In conjunction with today's Total Defence Day, "Exercise SG Ready 2025" will simulate power disruptions caused by ransomware spread through phishing to increase Singaporeans' and organisations' readiness for crises. As a signature event of SG60, "Exercise SG Ready 2025" is a highly important and significant example of "staying vigilant". I urge all enterprises to actively increase our readiness, strengthen our cyber resilience and develop robust Business Continuity Plans (BCP).
5. The global landscape of today is highly unpredictable. Challenges such as geopolitical tensions and conflicts, domestic unrest in different countries, rapid technological advancements and natural disasters caused by climate change are causes for concern. Terrorist groups have used the conflict in the Middle East to further their agenda and call for attacks. Just this year, five self-radicalised Singaporeans were detained or issued with a Restriction Order under the Internal Security Act respectively, including two young men aged 18 and 21. These recent cases point to a worrying trend. As a small island state, we must remain vigilant against any security threats. We must also be mentally prepared for the possibility that an attack can occur here in Singapore. As Prime Minister Lawrence Wong emphasised in his first Chinese New Year Message, "If that were to happen, we must be able to stand together as one united people, resolute and undivided. Such challenges should not weaken the fabric of our society, but instead strengthen our resolve to protect our harmony and way of life", highlighting the importance of the six pillars of Total Defence, especially Social Defence.
6. To build a more resilient economy and more united society, SCCCI will work even more closely with the Government and business community to uncover new opportunities in Singapore and abroad, as well as in the region. We will also continue to support various sectors in their transformation journey, as well as give back to the society and promote sustainability, which includes awarding

scholarships to nurture the next generation of talent. At the same time, we also encourage Singapore businesses and employers to continue supporting their male employees to serve their National Service, playing our part in strengthening our national defence.

7. In closing, I express my deepest condolences and sympathies to the civilian victims and their families. In this troubled and volatile world, let us live out the timeless wisdom of “Unity is Strength” and “Harmony above All” to defend the solidarity, peace and prosperity that did not come easy. Thank you.
