

# The Future of the Singapore Armed Forces Amidst the Transforming Strategic, Geopolitical and Domestic Environment

by ME5 Gabriel Lim Guang Nian

## Abstract:

The strategic and political environment has transformed since the start of this century. The attacks on the United States on 9/11 have led to prolonged 'war against terror' campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq with international repercussions. Within the Asia-Pacific region, heightening geopolitical rivalries between great and emerging powers have resulted in regional tensions. The role of the military in non-traditional security issues such as peacekeeping, pandemics and natural disasters has become a significant area of interest for international organisations such as the United Nations (UN), states and militaries. Domestically, we have seen greater diversity and expression of opinions on security, as well as the means to achieve it. The developments over the past 15 years have provided a glimpse into the challenges the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) could face in the future. This essay therefore seeks to identify the future challenges facing the SAF and the means by which they may be addressed.

*Keywords: Globalisation; Terrorism; Maritime Security; Humanitarian Assistance; Relevance of NS*

## INTRODUCTION

As a small island city-state with a lack of geographic strategic depth and little natural resources to buffer against exigencies, Singapore's approach to defence is shaped by both the unique circumstances surrounding our country's independence and the geostrategic limitations we face. To this end, Singapore has invested heavily in developing a technologically-advanced and capable military, the SAF, to defend her strategic interests and ensure her peace and security.

While the conventional threats to the city-state have not changed, the challenges facing the world—and the Asia-Pacific region in particular—mean that the SAF cannot afford to stand still. As such, to ensure that the SAF continues to be effective in its role as the defender of Singapore's sovereignty and territorial integrity, it is necessary to understand the

future challenges facing the SAF and assess how the SAF can evolve to address them.

## NON-TRADITIONAL TRANSNATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

The increased interconnectedness brought about by globalisation has redefined the nature of security threats that countries can expect to face today. Transnational security threats of the modern era such as terrorist groups, piracy networks and the like are evolving and will continue to pose challenges to the SAF. In addition, developments in the security landscape have necessitated the SAF to progress towards a full-spectrum integrated force with capabilities to conduct Operations Other Than War (OOTW) such as Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations and Peace Support Operations (PSO).

## Global Terrorism

The events of 9/11 in New York and Washington in 2001 demonstrated the global reach of terrorism and blurred the distinction between international and domestic security. In response to the attacks, the United States (US) led an international coalition on the Global War of Terror (GWOT) against Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Iraq in an effort to degrade its capabilities and curb international terrorism. And, while there has been a substantial decline in the number of worldwide terrorist attacks since 2007, conclusions on the success of the GWOT have been mixed and global terrorism continues to evolve.<sup>1</sup>

Today, the threat from terrorist groups is geographically diffused, from a diverse array of actors, and it is proving to be both resilient and adaptive to counterterrorism efforts.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the global jihadist movement continues to decentralise swiftly and now covers a broad swath of territory from the Indian Subcontinent, across the Middle East and the Levant, and throughout northern Africa.<sup>3</sup> Terrorist groups today are keeping pace with the advances in internet technology and social media so as to leverage on said platforms to perpetuate their extremist ideology and encourage individuals to act independently in support of their global movement. Consequently, this has led to the rise of 'home-grown', self-radicalised domestic terrorists such as Major Nidal Hasan, who was prosecuted for the 2009 Fort Hood shooting, and the Tsarnaev brothers, perpetrators of the Boston Marathon bombing in April 2013. However, while the use of internet by terrorist groups to spread their ideologies is not new, it is the strategic and highly exploitative use of social media technologies by emerging terrorist groups such as the Islamic State (IS), which has allowed terrorism to fester even more rapidly than before.<sup>4</sup> And, with increasing findings

and reports of self-radicalised local citizens leaving for Syria to join the IS's cause, there is fear that these returning fighters will seek to launch terrorist attacks in their own homeland.

*However, the maritime security landscape will continue to evolve. As such, similar to dealing with global terrorism, the evolving maritime threat environment will have to be addressed through greater inter-agency cooperation, international collaborations and improved information sharing.*

Given that the transnational terrorism's centre of gravity lies outside Singapore, a stove-piped approach to internal security and external defence will no longer work. As such, the SAF has undertaken various approaches, both internationally and domestically, to counter the threat of terrorism. Internationally, the SAF has supported the US efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, and enhanced inter-military cooperation and collaboration in collective action against terrorism through existing defence co-operation frameworks such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM+). Domestically, the SAF has sought to enhance her domestic peace-time counter terrorism capabilities. These include amending the SAF Act in 2007 to give the SAF additional powers against potential terror suspects, the setting-up of the Special Operations Task Force in 2009 equipped with the capabilities and equipment for peacetime contingencies, and the strengthening of interoperability between multiple agencies such as the Singapore Police Force through the Northstar series of exercises.<sup>5</sup>

Moving forward, Singapore continues to recognise the geographically-diffused nature of terrorism and



*Special Operations Task Force soldiers conducting an assault on terrorists during a training exercise.*

the need for the international community to work closely to counter this threat. As such, the SAF will have to continue leveraging upon its defence co-operation frameworks so as to seek long-term and sustainable solutions to address regional and international terrorism issues. With Singapore currently looking at how it can be a preferred partner in the fight against emerging terrorist organisations such as the Islamic State, future participation by the SAF in coalition-led efforts is also possible.<sup>6</sup> In this regard, the SAF will have to keep pace with developments in counter-terrorism capabilities while ever-strengthening its interoperability with foreign militaries through exercises such as the Joint Counter Terrorism exercise conducted together with the Indonesian National Defence Forces.<sup>7</sup>

To deter the rise of self-radicalised 'home grown' terrorists, the SAF must continue to work closely with

inter-governmental agencies in the area of intelligence sharing and in building psychological resilience against terrorism through Singapore's Total Defence framework. To this end, the SAF must continue to actively leverage on the use of social media as a platform to provide counter-narratives against terrorist ideologies and shape Singaporean's confidence in the SAF's capabilities to deal with the evolving terrorist threats.

### **Global Maritime Security**

Singapore is highly dependent on its strategic location along key sea lanes of communication for trade and commerce. As such, Singapore has an interest in preserving freedom of navigation and the safety of international shipping, and in combating threats at sea such as piracy and maritime terrorism. However, due to the trans-boundary nature of these threats and the recognition that no one country or agency is able to tackle the full range of maritime security

issues by itself, countries have banded together to secure these sea lanes despite differences in political outlook and national interests.<sup>8</sup>

For Singapore, the SAF has played an active role in supporting the international fight against piracy since 2009 through the deployment of task groups under the ambit of the multinational Combined Task Force 151 in the Gulf of Aden. Regionally, the SAF has contributed to maritime security efforts in the Strait of Malacca through initiatives such as the Malacca Strait Patrols and the setting up of the Republic of Singapore Navy's Information Fusion Centre (IFC).<sup>9</sup>

However, the maritime security landscape will continue to evolve. As such, similar to dealing with global terrorism, the evolving maritime threat environment will have to be addressed through

greater inter-agency cooperation, international collaborations and improved information sharing. As the SAF seeks to leverage on the capabilities of IFC in this regard, there is a need for the SAF to address the concerns and risks of information management and sharing. In addition, the SAF would have to create information sharing systems to facilitate interoperability among information-sharing partners. Lastly, the SAF will have to sustain the environment of mutual trust so as to promote integration among information-sharing partners.

### Operations Other Than War

Since 1970, the SAF has participated in a number of UN peace support operations and HADR missions at both regional and international levels. This is driven by the belief that the UN is an important institution for upholding international peace and



*The 145-strong task group from the SAF patrolling the Gulf of Aden in 2012.*

order, and in providing humanitarian assistance to countries in need.<sup>10</sup> With the increased interconnectedness of economies, the effects arising from natural disasters and pandemics can have global consequences. A case in point has been seen in the spread of the Ebola virus—a disease which before 2014 was mostly confined to remote African villages, but has since gone global and is now sparking fear in financial markets.<sup>11</sup> As such, the transnational nature of these global events has drawn the attention of various international organisations, states and their militaries.

The role of the military in OOTW has increased because disasters such as Hurricane Katrina and the Asian Tsunami have highlighted how useful certain military capabilities, such as strategic airlift and sealift, can be when first responders find themselves

overwhelmed. In June 2010, the defence ministers of New Zealand, Chile and Malaysia forcefully addressed the Shangri-La Dialogue, calling for disciplined and well-equipped forces that are able to bring relief at short notice.<sup>12</sup> OOTW capabilities, especially in the area of HADR, are therefore increasingly becoming a core task for defence forces.

The SAF recognises the increasing role of the military in OOTW and is investing in the development of full spectrum capabilities as part of its 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation transformation. However, operational and defence relations challenges in building up such capabilities remain. Firstly, the expeditionary nature of deployment for OOTW demands that the SAF possesses a high-level of operational readiness in both conventional and OOTW capabilities. As such, additional resource investments in manpower, equipment and training have to be made



*SAF personnel unloading relief supplies following Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013.*

due to fundamental differences between the two capabilities. Secondly, OOTW, especially in the area of HADR, continues to be a predominantly civilian function. As such, international norms may place limitations on the use of foreign military assets and thereby limit the extent to which the SAF can project its assistance. Thirdly, a multi-national effort is often required in responding to HADR operations and this poses challenges in the area of interoperability. Lastly, the projection of military forces across national and cultural borders will require the SAF to build up the cultural quotient of our people so that personnel are sensitive to the cultural nuances of the local community as they execute their operations.

To address the first challenge, the SAF needs to consider how it can synergise commonalities between conventional and OOTW capabilities amidst the finite resources that it possesses. These areas of commonality could include equipment, logistics systems and processes, and command and control infrastructure and linkages. At the organisational level, organisation structures can also be tweaked to facilitate seamless transition between conventional and OOTW operations. In addressing the second challenge, the SAF must equip its war-fighters with a clear understanding of its role as the first responders in HADR missions and on how military capabilities for HADR have to be translated in the civilian context so as to eventually allow for the smooth handover of relief operations to civilian agencies. To address the third challenge, the SAF must continue to strengthen its defence relations and cooperation with foreign militaries to enhance interoperability in HADR operations. In this regard, the conduct of the first Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief and Military Medicine exercise in 2013 by the ADMM+ group and the set-up of the Changi Regional HADR

Coordination Centre (RHCC) in 2014 were first steps towards achieving this.<sup>13</sup> Finally, in strengthening the cultural quotient of its warfighters, the SAF can continue to leverage on the cultural exposure opportunities provided by its numerous overseas detachments and exercises.

## REGIONAL GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES

The Asian-Pacific region has seen significant developments in its geopolitical landscape in recent years. China is asserting its influence in the region and has increased its pursuit of territorial claims in the East China and South China seas. Meanwhile, the US under the Obama administration, announced in 2011 that it is shifting its strategic 'pivot' from the Middle East to Asia so as to expand and consolidate its significant role in the Asia-Pacific, particularly in the southern part of the region.<sup>14</sup>

*As such, Singapore, moving forward, will need to retain its relevance by seeking to facilitate this re-balancing of US-China presence in the region. Specifically in the area of defence diplomacy, the SAF will need to continue investing in multilateral dialogues and security and diplomatic co-operation to address issues of shared concern between the US, China and ASEAN.*

Reactions to these developments by ASEAN members have been mixed, with those involved in territorial disputes with China expressing relief at the renewed engagement of the US, while others warn of the need to avoid tensions with China as the US re-engages the Asia-Pacific. Nonetheless, ASEAN countries have mostly sought to avoid siding openly

with the US or China.<sup>15</sup> In the case of Singapore, Singapore's Defence Minister Dr Ng Eng Hen has said that, "the US, as a resident power in the Asia-Pacific for the past 50 years, needs to continue that role as a stabilising force in the region."<sup>16</sup> As such, balancing the roles of Washington and Beijing in the Asia-Pacific region is an important goal of Singapore's foreign policy.<sup>17</sup>

Singapore has enjoyed strong defence relations with the US and has supported the US military's presence in the region through the provision of logistics support. In 2005, Singapore's defence relationship with the US was elevated to a new level with the establishment of a formal strategic military partnership agreement.<sup>18</sup> However, the emergence of China's influence in the region has not gone unnoticed. As such, after several decades of keeping Beijing at arm's length, Singapore has, since 2000, gradually increased security and

defence cooperation with China, including high-level dialogues and joint exercises.<sup>19</sup>

*Moving forward, the SAF needs to continue to recognise the importance of helping Singaporeans understand the evolving security challenges facing Singapore, the need for the SAF to protect Singapore's strategic interests and the relevance of NS.*

While it is uncertain as to how US-China relations in the Asia-Pacific will evolve, Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong believes that there is enough common ground for the US and China to accommodate each other.<sup>20</sup> As such, Singapore, moving forward, will need to retain its relevance by seeking to facilitate this re-balancing of US-China presence in the region. Specifically in the area of defence diplomacy, the



*The first batch of the SAF Volunteer Corps reciting the national pledge at the end of their basic training.*

SAF will need to continue investing in multilateral dialogues and security and diplomatic co-operation to address issues of shared concern between the US, China and ASEAN. Such diplomatic platforms include groups such as the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA), ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-PLUS (ADMM+) and the ASEAN Regional Forum. By leveraging on these platforms, Singapore and the SAF can then deal with the US and China from a position of strength, without which it would be unable to do so.

### **THE CHALLENGE OF AN INCREASINGLY ARTICULATE POPULATION**

Having lived in relative peace and prosperity since their country's independence, Singaporeans have become increasingly expressive about their views towards national defence issues such as defence spending, the role of women in the SAF and the relevance of National Service (NS). This poses a challenge to the SAF as it seeks to engage a generation that is more articulate, technologically adept and IT savvy. To compound the challenge further, all full-time National Servicemen by 2020 would have been born in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, raised in affluent Singapore, and have no direct memories of the country's early struggles. As such, there is also a need for the SAF to ensure that the defence of Singapore and the institution of NS remain relevant and responsive to the new generation.

The SAF recognises the need to engage Singaporeans on matters of defence and has sought to do so through social media platforms, community engagement programmes and partnership programmes with schools.<sup>21</sup> In addition, the SAF has engaged Singaporeans on issues pertaining to the institution of NS through the Committee to Strengthen National Service (CSNS), which was set up in 2013 and has

recently released its findings and recommendations. Various initiatives ranging from better vocational matching and recognition benefits, to the setting up of the SAF Volunteer Corps, were implemented following the CSNS recommendations. However, what is more notable is that these initiatives were a result of the collaborative effort in allowing Singaporeans to shape certain policies of the SAF.

Moving forward, the SAF needs to continue to recognise the importance of helping Singaporeans understand the evolving security challenges facing Singapore, the need for the SAF to protect Singapore's strategic interests and the relevance of NS. In this regard, the SAF will need to continue developing the strategic narratives pertaining to Singapore's defence and effectively communicate it through leveraging upon new advances in social media. Secondly, in ensuring that NS continues to be relevant and responsive to the new generation, the SAF must see through the implementation of all accepted CSNS recommendations. Lastly, to satisfy the needs of an increasingly articulate generation, the SAF must identify ways in which collaborative efforts can be taken to address key concerns that Singaporeans may have on Singapore's national defence.

### **CONCLUSION**

The developments over the past 15 years in the areas of non-traditional transnational security threats, regional geopolitics and an increasingly articulate Singaporean population have provided a glimpse to the challenges the SAF could face in the future. Through the build-up of new capabilities, strengthening of defence co-operation with foreign militaries and stepping-up of its engagement efforts with Singaporeans, the SAF will be able to address these challenges and continue to assure the peace and security of Singapore. 🌐



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abdul-Ahad, Ghaith. "Syria is not a revolution any more – this is civil war." (*The Guardian*, 2013). <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/18/syria-revolution-civil-war-conflict-rivalry>.

Anderson, Nicholas D. "'Re-defining' International Security." *The Josef Korbel Journal of Advanced International Studies*, 2012.

Andrews, Natalie, and Felicia Schwartz. "Islamic State Pushes Social-Media Battle With West." (*The Wall Street Journal*, 2014). <http://online.wsj.com/articles/isis-pushes-social-media-battle-with-west-1408725614>.

Anti-Defamation League. *Homegrown Islamic Extremism in 2013: The Perils of Online Recruitment & Self-Radicalization*. 2014. <http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/combating-hate/homegrown-islamic-extremism-in-2013-online-recruitment-and-self-radicalization.pdf>.

"Defence Policy & Diplomacy." (*Ministry of Defence*, Singapore, 2012).

[http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/key\\_topics/defence\\_policy.html](http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/key_topics/defence_policy.html).

Freeman, Colin. "Who is in the anti-Islamic State coalition and what they are contributing?" *The Telegraph*. September 26, 2014.

Jane's Defence Weekly. "Briefing: Punching above its weight." February 9, 2012.

Jochems, Maurits. "NATO's Growing Humanitarian Role." (*NATO Review*, 2006). <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2006/issue1/english/art4.html>.

Ow, Gary. "Information Sharing: A Singapore Perspective." *The Information Fusion Centre: Challenges and Perspectives*, *Pointer, Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces Supplement*, 2011.

Song, MAJ Samuel Yong Chiat. "The Global War On Terror: The Most Extensive and Successful Coalition Ever?" *Pointer, Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces*, 2012: v. 38 n. 2.

Spykerman, Kimberly, and Olivia Siong. "NS Must be Relevant and Responsive to New Generation of Singaporeans: Defence Minister." (*Channel NewsAsia*, 2014). [http://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/ips/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/05/CNA\\_NS-Must-be-Relevant-and-Responsive-to-New-Generation-of-Singaporeans\\_220514.pdf](http://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/ips/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/05/CNA_NS-Must-be-Relevant-and-Responsive-to-New-Generation-of-Singaporeans_220514.pdf).

Tiezzi, Shannon. "How Disaster Relief Can Save China-ASEAN Relations." (*The Diplomat*, 2014). <http://thediplomat.com/2014/10/how-disaster-relief-can-save-china-asean-relations/>.

Traynor, Ian. "Major terrorist attack is 'inevitable' as Isis fighters return, say EU officials." (*The Guardian*, 2014). <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/25/major-terrorist-attack-inevitable-isis-eu>.

Watkins, Derek. "Territorial Disputes in the Waters Near China." (*The New York Times*, 2014). [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/02/25/world/asia/claims-south-china-sea.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/02/25/world/asia/claims-south-china-sea.html?_r=0).

Yeong, LTC Chee Meng, MAJ Aaron Tan, MAJ Dean Tan, and CPT Jerediah Ong. "RSAF in Operations Other Than War - The Challenges." *Pointer, Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces*, 2007: v. 33 n. 1.

## ENDNOTES

1. Rogers, Abby. "FBI Reports A Startling Decline In Global Terrorism." (*Business Insider*, 2012). <http://www.businessinsider.com/fbi-terrorist-trends-for-2011-2012-10?IR=T&>.
  2. Rasmussen, Nicholas. "Cyber Security, Terrorism, and Beyond: Addressing Evolving Threats to the Homeland." *Hearing before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs*. September 10, 2014.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Rivers, Dan. "How terror can breed through social media." (*CNN*, 2013). <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/04/27/world/rivers-social-media-terror/>.
  5. Popatlal, Asha. "SAF given new powers to deal with changed security landscape." (*Channel NewsAsia*, 2007). <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/singaporelocalnews/view/277507/1.html>.
- Wong, Lester. "Minister for Defence visits the Special Operations Task Force." (*Ministry of Defence Singapore*, 2011). [http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/mindef\\_websites/atozlistings/army/army\\_news/News\\_Archive/2011/Sep2011/DM\\_SOTF.html](http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/mindef_websites/atozlistings/army/army_news/News_Archive/2011/Sep2011/DM_SOTF.html).
- "Fact Sheet: Exercise Northstar VIII - Testing and Validating the National Maritime Security System." (*Cyber Pioneer*, 2011). [http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/resourcelibrary/cyberpioneer/topics/articles/news/2011/nov/02nov11\\_news2/02nov11\\_fs.html](http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/resourcelibrary/cyberpioneer/topics/articles/news/2011/nov/02nov11_news2/02nov11_fs.html).
6. Hussain, Zakir. "Singapore looking at how to be helpful partner in fight against ISIS: PM Lee." (*The Straits Times*, 2014). <http://www.straitstimes.com/news/singapore/more-singapore-stories/story/singapore-looking-how-help-counter-isis-pm-lee-20141018#sthash.y37p58n4.dpuf>.

- Joint Counter-Terrorism Exercise." (*Press Release*, 2012). [http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press\\_room/official\\_releases/nr/2012/jul/16jul12\\_nr.html#.VFRu5Ba0SPQ](http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press_room/official_releases/nr/2012/jul/16jul12_nr.html#.VFRu5Ba0SPQ).
8. Lim, LTC Nicholas. "The Information Fusion Centre (IFC) - A Case for Information Sharing to Enforce Security in the Maritime Domain." *The Information Fusion Centre: Challenges and Perspectives*, Pointer, *Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces Supplement*, 2011.
9. "Fact Sheet: Information Fusion Centre (IFC)." (*Ministry of Defence*, Singapore, 2014). [http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press\\_room/official\\_releases/nr/2014/apr/04apr14\\_nr/04apr14\\_fs.html#.VF5RVxa0SPQ](http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press_room/official_releases/nr/2014/apr/04apr14_nr/04apr14_fs.html#.VF5RVxa0SPQ).
10. "Overseas Operations." (*Ministry of Defence*, Singapore, 2014). [http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/key\\_topics/overseas\\_operations.html](http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/key_topics/overseas_operations.html).
11. Belluz, Julia. "Ebola has never spread to this many countries before." (*Vox*, 2014). <http://www.vox.com/cards/ebola-facts-you-need-to-know/this-ebola-outbreak-started-in-the-rainforest-in-west-africa-and-its>.
- Hooper, Kristina. "Will the Ebola Scare Haunt the Stock Market?" (*Allianz Global Investors*, 2014). <http://us.allianzgi.com/Commentary/TheUpshot/Pages/will-the-ebola-scare-haunt-the-stock-market.aspx>.
12. Fischer, Elisabeth. "Disaster Response: The Role of a Humanitarian Military." (*Army-Technology.com*, 2011). <http://www.army-technology.com/features/feature125223/>.
13. "SAF and Other Militaries Conclude the ADMM-Plus HADR/MM Exercise." (*Ministry of Defence*, Singapore, 2013). [http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press\\_room/official\\_releases/nr/2013/jun/20jun13\\_nr.html#.VFVRfxa0SPQ](http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press_room/official_releases/nr/2013/jun/20jun13_nr.html#.VFVRfxa0SPQ).
- "Fact Sheet: Changi Regional HADR Coordination Centre (RHCC)." (*Ministry of Defence*, Singapore, 2014). [http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press\\_room/official\\_releases/nr/2014/sep/12sep14\\_nr2/12sep14\\_fs.html#.VFVR9\\_mUeSo](http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press_room/official_releases/nr/2014/sep/12sep14_nr2/12sep14_fs.html#.VFVR9_mUeSo).
14. Manyin, Mark E, et al. "Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration's "Rebalancing" Toward Asia." (*Congressional Research Service*, 2012). <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42448.pdf>.
15. Comment by Associate Professor Tan See Seng, Deputy Director of the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies. Quoted from from: Hussain, Zakir. "Special Report; ASEAN Nations Welcome US Pivot". *Maritime Security Asia*. November 28, 2011. <http://maritimesecurity.asia/free-2/asean-2/special-report-asean-nations-welcome-us-pivot/>.
16. Ng, Dr Eng Hen. "The Rise of Asia - Reaping Promises, Avoiding Perils" (*Today Online*, 2013). <http://www.todayonline.com/commentary/no-title-0>.
17. Chanlett-Avery, Emma. "Singapore: Background and US Relations." (*Congressional Research Service*, 2013). <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS20490.pdf>.
18. Ibid.
19. Storey, Ian. "China's Bilateral Defense Diplomacy in Southeast Asia." *Asian Security*, v.8 n.3, October 2012: 295-305.
20. Loong, Lee Hsien. "Speech by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at gala dinner hosted by US Chamber of Commerce and US-ASEAN Business Council." (*Prime Minister's Office, Singapore*, 2013). [http://www.pmo.gov.sg/content/pmosite/mediacentre/speechesinterviews/primeminister/2013/April/speech\\_by\\_prime\\_ministerleehsienloongatgaldinnerhostedbyuschamb.html#.VFUfKpUeSo](http://www.pmo.gov.sg/content/pmosite/mediacentre/speechesinterviews/primeminister/2013/April/speech_by_prime_ministerleehsienloongatgaldinnerhostedbyuschamb.html#.VFUfKpUeSo).
21. Gan, COL Siow Huang. "SAF Actively Engages the Community." (*The Straits Times*, 2014). <http://www.straitstimes.com/premium/forum-letters/story/saf-actively-engages-the-community-20140130>.



**ME5 Gabriel Lim Guang Nian** is an Air Force Engineer by vocation and is currently serving as the Officer Commanding of Structures Flight in 817 Squadron, Air Power Generation Command. He was awarded the Local Study Award (Engineering) and graduated with 1<sup>st</sup> Class Honours in Mechanical Engineering from the Nanyang Technological University. ME5 Lim's previous appointments included an overseas posting at the RSAF Peace Carvin II Detachment and a staff appointment at the Air Engineering and Logistics Department.