

Independence Day Celebration Remarks
Stephanie Syptak-Ramnath, Chargé d’Affaires, ai
July 6, 2018

Dr. Mohamed Maliki Ben Osman, Senior Minister of State at the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mayor, South East District

Ms. Jessica Tan, Member of Parliament for East Coast Group Representation Constituency

Mr. Teo Ser Luck, Member of Parliament for Pasir Ris-Punggol Group Representation Constituency

Colleagues from the government of Singapore, members of the Diplomatic Corps, fellow American citizens, our dear friends,

Good evening and welcome to our 242nd commemoration of America’s Independence Day. It is an honor to welcome each of you here tonight as a cherished counterpart with whom we work throughout the year, and to use this occasion not only to celebrate our country’s history but to also acknowledge that the United States is stronger as a nation with Singapore as our partner and our friend.

Never was this more on display than during the past months as we worked together to ensure the success of the Singapore Summit. President Trump’s vision of a different future for North Korea, and for the region, began with a simple proposition – that a meeting between two leaders could overcome years of mistrust to take the first steps towards peace and prosperity for the Korean peninsula, Asia, and the world.

But we all know that the choice of a setting, whether for a wedding, a July 4th celebration, or a historic Summit, is key. We needed a place which was accessible and secure. We needed a place which showed the prosperity that exists when leaders make the right choices for their people. We needed a place where people from around the world can feel welcomed and respected. And we needed a partner that is committed, not just with words but with actions, to leading the region and the world in the right direction. That’s why there was simply no better choice for a venue, for a partner, for success than Singapore.

None of us will ever forget the historic handshake that took place on June 12. And everyone in this room was part of that handshake in some small or large way.

We also won’t soon forget the images of Chairman Kim walking around Singapore on the evening of June 11. As all of us non-Singaporeans can attest, the first glimpse of this city, the first visit to the port or the business district or the Marina Bay Sands area, is simply awe-inspiring. But it does more than inspire awe. It inspires innovation. It inspires believing that we too can, and should, learn from Singapore’s success.

That’s what great cities do around the world. And that’s why, long before the Summit was announced, my colleagues and I chose the theme of great American cities for tonight’s

celebration. While we live and work in one of the world's smartest cities, we wanted to invite each of you to experience the United States through our own smart cities. Cities that are defined not only by their history, their architecture and their cuisine, but also by their universities, their innovation, and their entrepreneurship.

Cities like San Francisco, Chicago, and New York City which in addition to being fascinating tourist destinations, are regularly rated among the top 10 global cities for innovation, business outlook, and world class universities. Cities like Washington, DC which host some of the world's most interesting conversations, including the one between President Trump and Prime Minister Lee that took place last October, further strengthening our bilateral friendship that extends over 50 years.

Cities like Miami, which is the only major American city founded by a woman and which features the largest concentration of international banks in the country. Cities like Dallas which is the third most popular destination for business travel in the United States and the place where useful inventions such as the frozen margarita machine and the precursor to the microchip came into being.

All of these great cities, like Singapore, derive their strength from the diversity and talent of their citizens. That's why it's a special treat for us tonight to celebrate the great city of Philadelphia by welcoming the world-renowned Philadelphia Boy's Choir to sing our national anthems and to remind us that the future of our bilateral relations will remain harmonious for generations to come.

But before we hear their beautiful voices, I'd like to acknowledge all of the members of the United States armed forces present here tonight, including our inspirational Marine Guards and the multiple military components represented at the US. Embassy, and extending to Rear Admiral Tynch, the new commander of COMLOGWESTPAC, as well as the members of his team from Sembawang present here tonight. Thank you for your sacrifice and service to our country.

I would also like to express my deepest thanks to all of our corporate sponsors who have made this evening possible, not only for your generous donations but for all that you represent as American businesses and professionals around the world.

It is always a profound honor for me to visit our U.S. companies here in Singapore and to see firsthand the innovation that you are bringing to this region in diverse areas. Our businesses such as Exxon Mobile, Emerson, Energizer, Coca Cola and Honeywell have been here for decades, some for even more than a century. They are joined by thousands of others who continue to grow both in numbers and in size, bringing cutting edge technology, transparency, accountability, and reliability to markets throughout Asia.

But what really distinguishes American companies is the way that we interact with our employees, our customers, and our communities. I saw that firsthand at Edwards Life Sciences as they enabled their employees to meet with grateful patients from around the world whose lives had been changed by the heart valves made with care in Singapore. And at Mondelez, where

employees at all levels are encouraged to think outside of the box to improve productivity and quality. And at Bloomberg, Dell, Abbott, and Johnson & Johnson, where diversity is celebrated and individuals are made to feel as if they each belong.

Yes, our American companies are making a lasting difference in Singapore and around the world. Citi Group, which is the largest US employer of Singaporeans, was recognized as the Best Bank for Corporate Social Responsibility in Singapore in 2017, both for its work as a strong advocate of financial inclusion and youth development and its strong commitment to Climate Action. Companies like Boeing are partnering with the government of Singapore to support STEM education. Johnson & Johnson has been working closely with Singapore's science research agencies, healthcare institutes and government agencies over the last 40 years, to progress science innovation for the benefit of all Singaporeans. And IBM is contributing to local skills development through innovative programs on the digital workplace and by hiring apprentices from local Polytechnics, preparing them to step easily into high-growth, "new collar" jobs.

Our care for people extends also to the world in which we live. Just last week, 3M demonstrated its commitment to renewable energy in launching a 14,000 square meter solar farm in Tuas. Marina Bay Sands is similarly committed to protecting the environment, as its global sustainability program guides the company in responsible operations. And over the past decade, using water purification packets produced in Singapore, Proctor & Gamble has shared more than eight billion liters of purified drinking water in more than 75 countries, helping to save thousands of lives.

And that's just the tip of the iceberg. In April, I was privileged to join the American Chamber of Commerce in Singapore for its AmCham CARES event, at which we honored 52 AmCham member organizations from a variety of business sectors and industries for demonstrating that doing good is good for business. Many of those businesses are represented here tonight, and we thank you for all that you are doing to represent the very best of America.

While our large multinationals continue to pave the way, they are joined by American small and medium enterprises that are also entering the dynamic economic region that is ASEAN. Our SMEs are nimble, capable of flexing across platforms and sectors, and innovative in the way that they address our changing world. Companies like wework are literally changing the way that we work and collaborate together. And it makes sense that their partnerships in Asia begin right here in Singapore, where we share the same values, tenacity, and commitment to excellence.

President John F. Kennedy once observed that, "The American, by nature, is optimistic. He (or she) is experimental, an inventor, and a builder who builds best when called upon to build greatly." So tonight, as we celebrate the 242nd anniversary of US independence, we thank our forefathers for laying the strong foundation upon which we continue to build our great country. And it's only fitting that we also celebrate our citizens, our companies, our cities, and our friends who join us in also building a world of innovation, prosperity, and peace.

Thank you for doing that every day throughout the year. Thank you for being our partners and our friends. And thank you for joining us here tonight to celebrate July 4th together.