

## Managing International Relations

**What is the purpose of the chapters?  
How do Chapter 6 & 7 connect to other chapters?**

**What are the multi-faceted causes and impact of (international) conflicts?**

Deepening understanding of causes and impact of conflicts - developed from chapters 4 & 5.

Deepening appreciation of importance of maintaining peace and harmony - developed from chapters 4 & 5.

- Application of understandings developed from intra-national dimensions to understanding international conflicts.
- Similarities in terms of causes (similar categories of causes: political and economic competition, influence of belief systems, historical conflicts and always a combination of causes) and impact (wide-ranging and long term).
- Differences in terms of causes (larger scale of ambitions and greed at work) and impact (larger scale of destruction and damage; may be harder/easier to resolve depending on nature of conflict and indicators used to assess effectiveness of resolution).

Differences over territory, resources and ideologies as causes of conflicts. Opportunity to connect with concept of nationalism, nationhood.

- Sense of nationhood being threatened is often a cause for occurrence, aggravation of and difficulty in achieving resolutions to conflicts.
- Avoiding general statements about countries when assessing nationalism as a cause for aggressive actions, for it is often the acts of a few people/groups.

Assessing how other countries respond to conflicts as a means of developing more insights about other countries.

- Definition of resolution will differ according to context as there are different combinations of factors that contribute towards and aggravate conflicts.
- Try to look at how these countries maintain harmony, and not just focus on the conflicts they are embroiled in.

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**Managing international relations in Singapore to demonstrate governance in action. How does it demonstrate?**

How far are the principles of governance relevant to understanding Singapore's approach to managing international relations?

- Importance of leadership: clear directions steering foreign policy; in dealing with other countries, there is the adherence to protocol of respecting 'hierarchy' e.g. negotiating directly with leaders.
- Importance of change for the purpose of staying relevant: permanent interests and pragmatism as guiding principles in foreign policies.
- Opportunities for all: significant involvement in international organizations that uphold sovereignty of all member states, strong belief that small states like Singapore can punch above its own weight by playing useful roles in international affairs.

What does Singapore's approach towards deterrence and diplomacy tell you about the way Singapore perceive security (perception of threats, challenges; best way to ensure security)?

- Multi-faceted definition: total defense reflects a belief that various aspects of security need to be strengthened concurrently and cohesively.
- Great efforts are devoted to making sure that we are given due recognition and respect in spite of our size as well as towards making as many friends in the international arena as possible.

What are the possibilities of deepening our understanding of Singapore's national identity here?

- The image that Singapore projects to the outside world emanates from the identity we have constructed for ourselves.
- The perceptions other countries have of us also shape the continuous evolution of this identity.

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**What do I already know about the workings of and how would I assess Singapore's success in managing international relations?**

**What do my students already know/what are my students' existing perceptions?**

**What are my personal opinions?**

**How will I assess the success of the approach?**

**How can I find out/shape my students perceptions?**

- There may be a need to find out more about aspects of Singapore's foreign policies because it may not be immediately familiar to all of us, as our foreign policies may not always be the most visible aspects of governance. Building up a repository of materials that show different examples of Singapore's visibility on the international stage. □

- Probably not an area that most students will be familiar with; will need to build up their understanding by making connections with domestic policies (see section above on how Singapore's foreign policies do reflect principles of governance) and by making visible the invisible aspects of these policies (e.g. showing images of Singapore's involvement in international organizations, evidence of other countries' perception of Singapore's influence in the international arena) □

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**What are the different ways through which to develop an appreciation of the chapters?**

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**Changing nature and prevalence of conflicts**

- If possible to bring in historical perspectives (link it with what students have learnt in lower or upper secondary History), will be good to show how conflicts have changed in nature (form, means, approach) over time.

- There may not be the battle field wars of the past, but the wars of today are fought on different fronts and using very different technologies.

- The less visible nature of conflicts can also be attributed to the success of collective security organizations like the UN.

- Conflicts also seem less visible now with some regional conflicts being neglected because it does not attract as much media attention.

### **The multi-faceted roles of regional and international organizations**

- Important to look at how they maintain peace through the relationship building during peacetime as much as the interventionist roles they play during times of conflict.

### **Why is the successful maintenance of international relations so crucial for Singapore? □ □**

- Singapore's size and vulnerabilities
- Relationship to economics successes.
- Image we have built up as honest brokers and mediators

### **What are the controversial issues that could arise from this topic? □**

- Relations with neighbors e.g. Malaysia, Indonesia and Myanmar.

- Amount of resources devoted to national defense.

### Resources

The links cover resources that look at key principles, approaches and evaluation of Singapore's foreign and defense policy, including state policies aimed at strengthening national defense forces and Total Defence, Singapore's contributions to UN agencies and APEC as well as the development of Singapore's image on the international stage

[gov.sg policy section on defence & security](#) □

[Ministry of Defence](#) □

[United Nations Association of Singapore](#)

[United Nations Development Fund for Women \(Singapore Committee\)](#)

[APEC in Singapore \(Closing statement for 2009 Meeting\)](#)

[Singapore's foreign policy: coping with vulnerability \(book\)](#)

Leifer, M (2000). Singapore's foreign policy: coping with vulnerability. London: Routledge, 2000.

Analysis of how Singapore's foreign policy can be understood with reference to the realistic approaches that have defined the country's economic and other domestic policies.

[Singapore's foreign policy: the search for regional order \(book\)](#)



Acharya, A. (2007). [Singapore's foreign policy: the search for regional order](#). Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2007.

Analysis that provides new perspectives on how Singapore has emphasized ideas and cooperation in its quest to be a country that is only small in terms of size and not in terms of influence on the regional and global stage. Includes key foreign policy speeches by Singapore leaders.

### [Realism and interdependence in Singapore's foreign policy \(Book\)](#)

Ganesan, N. (2005). Realism and interdependence in Singapore's foreign policy. London: Routledge, 2005.

Examines the importance of Singapore's economic and defence diplomacy as main pillars of its foreign policy. Special focus on bilateral relations with Malaysia and Indonesia.

### [S Rajaratnam on Singapore: from ideas to reality \(book\)](#)

Kwa, C.G. (2006). S Rajaratnam on Singapore: from ideas to reality. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2006.

Key speeches and articles by one of Singapore's founding fathers, who laid the foundations for key tenets of the country's foreign policy.

### ["Creating a Singapore brand for the International Stage" Speech by Kishore Mahbubani](#)

Speech by one of Singapore's preeminent thinkers and diplomats, evaluating the effectiveness of Singapore's branding efforts in the international arena.

### **Foreign Policy and Asian Values debate**

Chong, A. (2004). Singaporean foreign policy and the Asian Values Debate, 1992–2000: reflections on an experiment in soft power. *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 17 No. 1 March 2004, pp. 95–133.

Between 1992 and 2000, the international order witnessed a clash of discourses not seen since the height of the Cold War when both superpowers engaged in propaganda offensives to assert the superiority of their respective governing ideologies. However, unlike the Cold War, the Asian Values Debate did not involve a supporting cast of armed occupations, insurgencies and the preaching of revolution. It involved instead statements of difference couched in intellectual and material terms, and also relied heavily on persuasion by words and symbolic deeds. This article seeks to evaluate Singaporean foreign policy in the Asian values debate by using the concept of soft power as described by Joseph Nye. However, soft power, as the ability to obtain foreign policy ends through attraction or convincing rather than through coercion, is itself vulnerable to instances where the ideas propounded diverge from the practices they purport to inspire. Singapore's role in the Debate will be examined through three events at its zenith between 1992 and 2000: the clash between Asia and the West at the 1993 United Nations World Conference on Human Rights at Vienna, the Michael Fay Caning Affair which directly pitted Singapore against the US in 1994, and the fate of the Asian exceptionalist argument in the face of the 1997–99 Asian Financial Crisis. The conclusion suggests that Singaporean foreign policy's experiment in soft power has had its successes, but it remains qualified in its applicability to other Asian foreign policies by certain limits inherent in the Singaporean discourse.

### **Small Country Total Defence**

Mathews, R. & Zhang, N.Y. (2007). "Small Country, 'Total Defence': a case study of Singapore". *Defence Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 376–395.

Evaluates the effectiveness of Singapore's multi-pronged defence strategy.

## **Singapore's Military Modernisation**

“Singapore’s military modernisation: Upgrading the city state’s deterrent”. Military Technology. Vol 2. 2008.

Brief but very readable article on recent technological strides as well as good consolidation of the multi-faceted nature of Singapore’s strategy of deterrence and diplomacy.