

Deputy Prime Minister,

Ladies, Gentlemen, Ministers, Parliament Members, Distinguished Guests,

It is a great honour for me to be invited to this Conference held for the 40th Singapore Lecture.

You have held the Conference at the time of my State visit to Singapore, but also to confirm the strategic partnership uniting our two countries, because Singapore is more than a country with which we just have excellent relations, which is the case. Singapore is a partner that because of its solidity, its stability and its security, we consider an ally. Singapore is also a source of inspiration due to its ability to anticipate the realities of tomorrow and to take the initiative as you have shown in recent years.

Indeed, you had with Lee Kuan Yew, an aspiration which made your country a leader in the region and one of the countries with the highest income per capita in the world.

What is your secret? I did not come here to expose this secret, but to understand it. The secret is first this confidence in opening up, this ability to fully take part in the world, to be aware that your most important quality is that of innovation. Indeed, your geographic location is exceptional, on the coast of the Strait of Malacca at the intersection between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. But geography does not explain everything, you have been able to capitalize on this situation to become a genuine international hub.

You are now the second biggest port in the world and I am extremely proud that a French company, CMA-CGM, has realized a far-reaching investment plan here with a Singaporean partner, PSA.

You have also made the choice to focus on technology so that it would be fully present in your financial activities as well as in your ways of building sustainable cities, in your modes of transport, and in the capacity to connect people with one another.

That is how Singapore has become a global intelligent city model where all innovative solutions are developed. This is why, — and this is the third explanation of your secret—, you attract talented people from all over the world, researchers, entrepreneurs, startupper and you can also be proud of the fact that many French people have relocated here. Some 15,000

according to official statistics, and I am referring to ours, and more if we are to look at the realities of the Singaporean economy.

That is a sign that you are a country that attracts talent and young talent. Here is what I have understood from your model: opening up, confidence in the future, innovation, appeal and the ability to be one step ahead.

These principles are also our principles, France would like to be an open, innovative country, able to take initiative, concerned with finding a place for its young people and able to invest all of its potential in innovation. We, Singapore and France, must therefore defend these principles and this model because it is currently being threatened. Threatened by inward-looking behaviour, by protectionism, by isolationism, by extremism, by nationalism. This temptation to turn inwards is not only dangerous but it brings us to an impasse, which requires our vigilance with regard to all of these re-emerging solutions that unfortunately proved to be extremely damaging not so long ago.

The only path forward that should be recommended to the world if it is to be safer, and fairer is the defence of a few simple principles, the first being the commitment to multilateralism, in other words, international institutions, international law, and international and regional cooperation. These principles must also include independence, respect and the affirmation that openness is a condition for progress.

Ladies and gentlemen, our course must be especially clear since threats have now been added to uncertainties. Uncertainties can arise from elections, their expectations or their outcome. Uncertainties are also hesitations on the part of world leaders. Uncertainties can also be different powers struggling to find their balance. We are living in a world of uncertainties, if we add economic and climate challenges to the mix, we are inevitably facing a world in which we cannot foresee and plan with the same criteria or under the same conditions as in the past.

But these uncertainties are compounded by threats. The first is terrorism. France was hit extremely hard and it is fully engaged in the fight against this scourge that can happen anywhere. The influence of Daesh that we are tackling at this time even in Iraq and Syria with the international coalition is a danger to us all. More than 1,000 citizens of Southeast Asian countries are fighting on the Iraqi-Syrian front alongside hundreds of European citizens who can return to their home countries at any time to commit terrorist attacks there. And we are also aware that there are isolated individuals who can use Daesh propaganda to attack us.

Fighting terrorism therefore requires more cooperation between governments and intelligence services, between police forces, between judicial institutions and joint efforts to combat radicalization and the different types of trafficking that finance terrorist groups.

We are also aware that we must use technology-related weapons against those who precisely want to use technology to destabilize or destroy our information systems. I am thinking of cyber security and cyber defence that must be a priority for countries intending to protect themselves against external influences and also terrorist attacks.

Our victory will depend on our determination and our ability to join forces when it comes to prevention, protection and responses and I know that France and Singapore share exactly the same approach.

In this fight we must also be true to ourselves, respect our rule of law and refuse to accept any hate speech or discrimination. Even when France was attacked, I made sure as President of the French Republic to preserve national cohesion and unity because that is what terrorists want to chip away, undermine, and damage, and they want to create in our country, in our societies, a separation, a division that could be fatal. We must now be careful to avoid making generalizations and to be clear about the way in which we would like to live together. In France we have a word for expressing this ability to be both free and at the same time respectful, it is *laïcité* (secularism) and it is what we have been able to uphold. All individuals are free to practice the religion of their choice or no religion at all and must respect common law. At the same time, in addition to the neutrality that it must practice, the State has the obligation to protect all places of worship.

But we are involved in a war on terrorism that is going to last a long time and that means our societies must be prepared. It also means that our political leaders must be aware that it will take more than a law, additional legislation or additional resources to be done with this scourge. It will require action that must be conducted on an appropriate scale, which today means worldwide, and with crucial determination, which means using all means necessary to achieve our goal, apart from those that lead us to act outside the the rule of law.

But we clearly see that the fear of terrorism, with in addition wars that can occur far from home but, with the globalization of information, are on our doorstep. We clearly see that populists and extremisms can use the fears —albeit legitimate— that these situations provoke to try to impose solutions that would go against the interests of each of our countries. The temptation that I mentioned early, to turn inwards, can be present in large countries, in large democracies, and can concern entire continents. Therefore, we must also explain what the consequences of these choices would be and what it would mean to close our borders, build

walls, promote close—not to say selfish—national interests or an unfair and inappropriate migration policy since it would only target nationals of one country and one country only.

We must therefore show that there is another way to act. It involves what I call regulated globalization that should be based on the sovereignty of nations but also on the role of international institutions and particularly the United Nations.

And all those who would like to criticize the United Nations, in the end, reduce the capacity of global governance to take action to address the very causes of the conflicts. Nations cannot be strengthened to the detriment of the international regulatory system. We can be sure of what we are without having to challenge everything that happened after the Second World War, and which has made it possible, despite a few shortcomings, to avoid conflicts or at least to settle the most important ones.

Likewise, economically speaking, although it is easy to convince public opinions that with customs barriers, with taxes, it will be possible to defend employment, we know that these proposals would have exactly the opposite effect, because all of the global growth over these last sixty years has been driven by global trade. That does not mean that free trade, without regulations, without controls, without standards, would be the solution. It quite simply means that if it is not possible to trade goods and services, and to facilitate the movement of knowledge, expertise, and technology, there is a risk of an overall weakening, a shrinking of horizons, a decrease in investments and ultimately, an elimination of jobs.

These are not theoretical debates. These are not academic or economic debates. They are realities that have been demonstrated in the past. We must never believe that new ideas are actually new. There is always a trace from the past, an origin. Protectionism is as old as trade. It is a debate that was already taking place in the middle of the 19th century in Europe and that resurfaced in the middle of the 20th century before the Second World War and that inevitably has returned today in the early 21st century.

Therefore, in the face of protectionism, we should show that respect for an international order is ultimately the best solution and that entire continents should have trade agreements. I would once again like to point out that this is what we did between Europe and Singapore or between Europe and ASEAN very soon.

I would also like to stress how important it is for us to move away from power struggles that would end up calling the international order into question. International law is what enables us, in our world, to have rules and to enforce them. Among these rules, it is precisely because

of the law of the sea and free movement that France, which is present in the Pacific Ocean, regularly exercises its right of passage in the South China Sea, in close connection with its European allies, because we want these principles to be preserved.

I would like to talk about another threat, which concerns you in Asia, but which concerns us all, and that is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. A few months ago, we were able to sign a nuclear agreement with Iran. In it, we found a balance that has allowed us to ensure that Iran will not acquire nuclear weapons. But we also know that there are temptations in North Korea,—more than a temptation—, there is a desire to acquire an operational nuclear weapon. There again, we must do everything in our power, including through sanctions, to prevent this situation that could undermine the security of populations and the balance in the region.

With regard to this non-proliferation challenge, France took part in Exercise Deep Sabre in October 2016, which was organized by Singapore. We consider it to be an effective response and the right path for working together.

I would like to finish with one last threat, which is climate change. With regard to this issue as well, Singapore and France have shared the same opinion and have demonstrated the same commitment. Here the challenge can be seen in the increasing number of heavy rains in Southeast Asia, forest fires and a sea level rise. Many countries are at risk. I am thinking of Bangladesh, which could lose up to a third of its territory, Vietnam, whose two big deltas, the Mekong and Red River Deltas, are concerned by rising water levels and soil salinization.

In the face of these risks,— which we are already experiencing, which are no longer just hypotheses, which are certain, if we do not act—, we must once again invest and honour the commitments we have made. I would like to commend Singapore's commitments and investments, particularly with regard to supplying safe drinking water and to developing cutting-edge construction expertise.

I would like to commend the work of your Foreign Minister, which enabled the Paris Conference to reach a crucial compromise. That is the why we must do everything we can so that the Paris Agreement is fully respected and implemented. It is irreversible and no country, no power, can separate themselves from this problem. And we need to go even further. That is what you have done in Singapore with the carbon tax for 2019, because carbon must have a price if we want investments, both physical and financial, to include this price dimension so that optimal choices can be made regarding the allocation of capital.

We must also find innovative solutions for the transition, which we have done, particularly with India with regard to the International Solar Alliance or to develop low-carbon economies everywhere in the world. That is what lies ahead, uncertainties, threats, but we are not powerless and let alone indifferent. We can act, it is the role of States to do so. And France considers that it has a special duty, not because it is more qualified than other States to take today's realities and tomorrow's challenges into account because of its past, but because we uphold the principles we share with Singapore and that apply to us and the entire world.

What we are defending are universal values, not special interests but the planet's interest. We are constantly aspiring to promote stability, security, progress and development. We believe that globalization should be governed and we are not afraid to say that there should be global governance, since today the world has become our horizon, our environment.

It is undoubtedly because they had this lucidity regarding the role that Asia and Europe could play that Jacques Chirac and Lee Kuan Yew wanted to create ASEM, a forum for dialogue and exchange between the Heads of State and Government of the two continents. This dialogue must absolutely continue because today it is more necessary than ever since Europe is the number one economic power in the world, the number one trade power in the world and since Asia is a continent of the world's future.

Singapore is one of the founding members of ASEAN, which will soon celebrate its 50th anniversary. Europe just celebrated its 60th anniversary of the signature of the Treaty of Rome. We should encourage the development of relations between these two major organizations. The European Union should be more involved with ASEAN, be more active in terms of investment, official assistance and technological exchanges and should have a structural relationship with ASEAN.

Likewise, the European Union is negotiating trade agreements with several countries in the area, including Singapore but also the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, where I will be in a few days. The aim is for the European Union and ASEAN to have a strategic partnership. In the same vein, I know that ASEAN would like to enhance its integration, and that this decision could develop trade with the European Union. In any case, you can be assured, Deputy Prime Minister, that France will support the agreement between Singapore and the European Union, especially with regard to the transport dimension.

So ladies and gentlemen, what I came to deliver to you today is a message of lucidity because the world is being threatened, but a message of truth, because we must act and we have the power to act. And lastly, a message of will, because it is possible to undertake action. Through what we are, Europe, Asia, that is to say, a large portion of the world, policies that can produce stability, security and development.

I would like to remind you that France wanted to be fully present in Asia. French companies have set up business here. We have been able to double our trade for example with Singapore in ten years' time. We have built major partnerships focusing on aviation, but now on energy, the environment and sustainable cities, and we intend to make French technology very present in Asia. This will require even larger investments than those we have made thus far, even if in ten years' time, the stock of investments that have been made by French companies in Asia has tripled to reach €100 billion.

Similarly, France is willing to welcome even more investments from Asia, which have likewise tripled over the last ten years. But to establish this relationship, we must have confidence. This confidence must be given carefully because it is extremely important in the areas of defence, industry and technology, to know with whom we are working. France has confidence in Singapore because here you have provided all of the necessary conditions for investors, companies, researchers and academics to work freely and with potential for development.

And I would like to believe that you also have confidence in France, because France has this capacity for invention, innovation, and at the same time, freedom. It is because we are aware that the values we uphold are universal and that France has a role to play in Asia that I wanted, at the end of my term of office, to make this visit to Singapore, tomorrow to Malaysia, and the day after tomorrow to Indonesia. I know that France will be warmly welcomed. Thank you.