

TRANSCRIPT OF SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER LEE HSIEN LOONG AT THE JOINT LAUNCHING CEREMONY FOR *IMPECCABLE* AND *ILLUSTRIOUS* ON 13 DEC 2022, AT TKMS SHIPYARD IN KIEL, GERMANY

Chancellor Olaf Scholz

Distinguished Guests

Guten Tag or as they say in Kiel, Moin Moin.

My wife Ho Ching and I are very honoured to be here today at the launch of not just one, but two of the Republic of Singapore Navy's (RSN) four *Invincible*-class submarines.

The first submarine, the *Invincible*, was launched by Prof Ivy Ng, when she and Dr Ng Eng Hen, the Defence Minister, visited Germany in February 2019. And we are very happy to have them here with us today.

Also glad that today Ho Ching will be launching the second and third submarines: the *Impeccable* and the *Illustrious* and in due time, we will launch the fourth submarine – the *Inimitable*.

Those familiar with naval traditions know that ships and submarines are typically launched out of the water, at an earlier phase of construction. So it is quite unusual that the two submarines we are launching today – *Impeccable* and *Illustrious* – are already in the water.

Because while we put on hold the full ceremonies due to COVID-19 restrictions, we did not let the pandemic delay work on the submarines. Personnel from the RSN and DSTA, as well as tkMS adapted and worked tirelessly to keep up the momentum of this project over these last two difficult years.

Bilateral Defence Relations

Singapore and Germany are like-minded partners with close people-to-people ties and strong cooperation across many areas. Just last month, I was delighted to host Chancellor Scholz in Singapore, during his trip to our region.

His visit reflected the excellent state of relations between our two countries as well as Germany's strong interest in the Asia Pacific.

Today, Chancellor Scholz has joined us again, to mark this milestone for the RSN. I am honoured and delighted, and I thank Chancellor Scholz and the German government for their support and affirmation.

Defence relations between Singapore and Germany are warm and growing. They are anchored on the Defence Cooperation Agreement, which was first established

in 2005, and later enhanced in 2018. Germany continues to support training and live-firing for the SAF's German-made Leopard tanks in the Oberlausitz Military Training Area. This year, Singapore hosted the German frigate FGS *Bayern* and the German Air Force's Eurofighters and tankers for their inaugural regional deployments.

Our Navy-to-Navy engagements have grown steadily, including through the newly established Submarine Affiliation Programme. The two submarines being launched today are a tangible manifestation of our close and productive cooperation.

I would like to thank tkMS and the German Navy for your strong support and sharing of expertise. Our collaboration on this strategic capability underscores the depth of our partnership and the trust between our navies and our defence industries. I am confident that the relationship between Germany and Singapore will grow from strength to strength, and I look forward to more meaningful interactions between our militaries.

RSN's Submarine Journey

Singapore is a maritime nation. We are highly reliant on the free and unimpeded movement of goods and materials across the sea for our prosperity and indeed survival. The RSN has the crucial mission of keeping our Sea Lines of Communication open. Submarines provide the RSN an added capability to fulfil this role.

The RSN has come a long way in building up its submarine force. In 1997, it launched its first submarine – a refurbished Swedish boat in service since the late 1960s. Year by year, the RSN overcame difficult challenges to build up its submarine knowledge, technical know-how and experience.

Now the RSN is embarking on the next phase of its journey. The four *Invincible*-class submarines are the RSN's first new-build boats, and will bring modern and advanced capabilities to the navy.

Our defence scientists and engineers have worked closely with tkMS to modify the Type-214 submarine design and tailor the systems on-board to suit Singapore's needs and operational requirements. For example, the submarines are designed to be operated by a small crew, critical given our small population. Advanced automation and sense-making will significantly increase the crew's ability to operate for prolonged periods at sea.

Other modifications include an entirely new rudder drive system for high-precision manoeuvres in our shallow waters, as well as ergonomic tweaks for our submariners' smaller frames.

Because we took considerable steps to custom-design our submarines, they have been classified as a type of their own – the Type-218SG. It is Made in Germany, and uniquely Singapore!

A New Generation of Submariners

Of course, the submarine is only as good as its crew. So I say to our submariners, you carry the heavy and important responsibility of operationalising these new submarines. I encourage you to draw inspiration from our pioneers, and demonstrate the same tenacity and commitment to excellence that they did.

In the next months and years, you and your boats will be put through the paces. These submarines are swifter, quieter and have more firepower and endurance than anything the RSN has operated before.

You will have to translate the platform's new capabilities into new operating concepts and doctrines. Having done that, you can expect more challenging tasks and missions to be assigned to you.

Lead your teams well, and always hold dear to your mission to keep our maritime nation safe and secure, a mission which is more critical than ever in today's world. May the service of a new generation of submariners live up to the names: *Impeccable* and *Illustrious*.

Thank you very much.