First, let me bid all of you a warm welcome to the launch of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies Endowment Fund. I would also like to thank all our donors and members of the RSIS Fund Raising Committee chaired by Mr. S. Chandra Das. Without the generosity of our donors and the tireless efforts of the fund raising committee, we would not have reached our target of $40 million so quickly.

When RSIS was established on 1 January 2007, it took over from the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies which was established ten years earlier in 1996. More specifically, RSIS took over from IDSS its teaching
and research functions, while IDSS remained as a core unit in the new School with a focus on defence and security-related research.

Building on the achievements of its predecessor, RSIS has acquired an international reputation as a focal point in Asia for teaching and research in strategic studies, security studies, international relations and international political economy. It has also become a key player in the global network of think tanks and research institutions working in these areas.

RSIS’ enhanced status as a school will help us to achieve our aim of becoming the leading professional graduate school of international affairs in Asia. As a school, RSIS is in a better position to attract high quality faculty and students to Singapore, to cater to an expanding teaching programme, and to manage a growing number of research centres and research programmes.

We already have an international faculty. Our graduate programmes have attracted students from around the world with almost two-thirds of them in the current cohort coming from overseas. So far, students from 39 countries have attended our programmes; which is a testimony to our growing international reputation.

In the years ahead, we will use earnings from the RSIS Endowment Fund to engage world-class scholars to teach and to research at RSIS, to send promising young staff to complete their PhD programmes in other universities and to award scholarships to talented students pursuing their studies with us. The Endowment has also enabled us to establish two new professorships. These are the Ngee Ann Kongsi Professorship in
International Relations and the NTUC Professorship in International Economic Relations. It has also enabled us to establish the prestigious S.T.Lee Lecture series that would allow us to invite a distinguished scholar or policy maker to address a Singapore-wide audience annually.

While earnings from the RSIS Endowment Fund will be used for the purposes of the School, the income arising from the existing IDSS Endowment Fund will be utilised for the specific purposes of running IDSS research programmes and activities, for which it was first raised. The IDSS Endowment Fund which started off with $20 million in 1996 has grown and now stands at $31.6 million as of December 2007. We hope to be able to grow the RSIS Endowment Fund as well in the years ahead.

Once again, thank you for your donations to the RSIS Endowment Fund. We are grateful to you for your generosity and support. As we continue to grow, we hope we will continue to receive your support. Given that the School’s work is geared towards finding solutions to some of our most pressing security concerns, I can assure you that your donations will not be in vain. We will live up to your faith in us.