

Cheat Sheet

Managing International Relations

International relations are the relations between different countries and regions managed through foreign policies. It is especially vital for a smaller country like Singapore to maintain healthy relations with other countries due to its limited resources. Find out more about international conflicts, and how Singapore manages its international relations to prevent such conflicts and to build peace.



Causes of International Conflicts

Some possible causes of international conflicts are:



Economic Conflict

Involves competitions to get scarce resources such as water, or trade disputes.



Value Conflict

Involves differences in ways of life or ideologies, such as capitalist ideology versus communist ideology during the Cold War.



Power Conflict

Occurs when a country or region wants to maintain or exert more influence in its relations with another country, leading to conflicts.

When conflicts between countries are not resolved peacefully, it can lead to strained relations and even wars.

Did You Know?

The world has experienced World War I and II.

World War I (1914-1918):
Estimated 10 million people killed.¹³

World War II (1939-1945):
Estimated 60 to 80 million people killed.⁶



The Challenge of Terrorism

In recent times, the threat of terrorism increasingly affects countries around the world.

Terrorism involves the use of violence and threats to intimidate, especially for political purposes. Singapore had also experienced terrorist attacks in its history.

Example:

Hijacking of Singapore Airlines flight SQ 117 (26 March 1991):

Commandos of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) successfully rescued the passengers and crew from four hijackers.



Singapore has adopted the two-pronged approach of *Diplomacy and Deterrence* to cultivate peaceful relations with other countries.

DIPLOMACY

The management of relations between countries

Singapore uses diplomacy in the following ways:

- Establishing strong, friendly bilateral and multi-lateral relations in the region and around the world
- Playing our part as a responsible member of the international community
- Membership in regional and international organisations



Did You Know?

SCP has trained over 80,000 officials from 170 countries since its establishment in 1992.⁸



Examples of Singapore's Diplomacy Efforts:

1. Taking part in international events:

Singapore holds and participates in international events, such as the 28th SEA Games Singapore 2015 and the Singapore Grand Prix.

2. Overseas assistance:

The Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF)'s **Operation Lionheart** sends search-and-rescue teams to regions affected by natural disasters, such as earthquakes.

Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) provides training and experience sharing in areas where Singapore is strong in, such as Public Administration, Economic Development, Port Management, Civil Aviation and Water Management.

3. Upholding international law and system:

Singapore is a party to many international treaties and agreements, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.

To minimise economic conflicts, Singapore has to date signed 20 regional and bilateral **Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)** with 31 trading partners.¹²

These agreements reduce or eliminate barriers to trade, and facilitate the cross border movement of goods and services between Singapore and its trading partners.

4. Membership in regional and international organisations:

ASEAN Membership:

- Founding member of ASEAN, together with Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand in 1967
- 10 member states in ASEAN as of 2015¹



DETERRENCE

The taking of actions to discourage someone from doing something because of the fear of the consequences

According to the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF)⁷, Singapore adopts the following strategies to deter any would-be aggressors:

I. Total Defence strategy:

There are **5 Pillars of Total Defence** in Singapore's defence strategy.

Military Defence

Keeping Singapore secure by building a strong defence to deter foreign intervention and prevent ourselves from being attacked.

Civil Defence

Taking care of our family, friends and people around us in times of crisis, and taking part in emergency exercises to be ready.

Economic Defence

Having a strong and resilient economy that can sustain Singapore through economic challenges and national emergencies.

Social Defence

Living harmoniously and looking out for one another, regardless of race, language or religion.

Psychological Defence

Being a resilient people, with the resolve and determination to overcome any crisis together.

II. Professional and citizen armed forces:

3rd Generation Singapore Armed Forces (SAF):

Our armed forces have evolved into the 3rd Generation SAF, with well-trained and professional soldiers making use of modern technology to deploy forces and engage in combat effectively.

National Service (NS):

NS was introduced in 1967 due to Singapore's limited manpower and small population.

Did You Know?

About **50%** of the total strength of the armed forces is national servicemen.³

III. Defence industries:

The Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA) was formed in 2000 to provide modern yet cost-effective technology to make the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) a powerful fighting force for the defence and security of Singapore.

IV. Joint military exercises with other nations:

Singapore cultivates friendly ties with the armed forces of other countries through military agreements, joint military exercises and training programmes.

INTERESTING FACT

Singapore is a member of the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA), comprising Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United Kingdom (UK).



V. Multi-agency coordination on security:

The National Security Coordination Centre (NSCC) was set up for better coordination and collaboration across different ministries on all aspects affecting the nation's security.

SEARCH TIPS

Search Tip 2:

Using subject headings in library catalogues

1. Visit website <http://catalogue.nlb.gov.sg>
2. Click on link for "Advanced Search"

Do a search on a relevant "Subject", such as defence.

The screenshot shows the NLB Catalogue Advanced Search page. The 'Subject' field is active, showing 'Singapore - Defenses'. Other fields like 'Title', 'Author', 'Keywords', 'Dewey Class', 'Year', and 'Language' are also visible with their respective dropdown menus and input fields.

The screenshot shows the search results for the subject 'Singapore - Defenses'. The results list four items:

1. Defence and decolonisation in Southeast Asia : Britain, Malaya and Singapore 1941-1968 / Karl Hack. Hack, Karl. London : Routledge, 2014. ©2001.
2. N.E.mation! 7. Together we overcome / organised by Nexus, Animagine Pte Ltd. Singapore : Nexus : Animagine Pte Ltd., [2013?]
3. Our Air Force story : RSAF 45th anniversary [Singapore] : Republic of Singapore Air Force, [2013]
4. Close watch : a nation's resolve to secure Singapore / Ben Nadarajan. Ben Nadarajan, 1977.

3. Other subject headings that may be relevant for this topic are:

Conflict management, International cooperation, International relations, Singapore Armed Forces, Singapore Defences, World politics

To find books that are more relevant to primary or secondary levels, please add the term '**juvenile literature**' in your search, e.g. 'International relations juvenile literature'.



The information in this cheat sheet is accurate at the time of production.
This cheat sheet is intended for educational purposes only.

References:

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4. Fisher, R. (1977). Sources of conflict and methods of conflict resolution. Retrieved July 8, 2015, from http://www.communicationcache.com/uploads/1/0/8/8/10887248/sources_of_conflict_and_methods_of_resolution.pdf
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10. Prasad, V., & Ho, S. (2014, November 25). Hijacking of Singapore Airlines flight SQ 117. Retrieved July 8, 2015, from Infopedia: http://ereresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_834_2004-12-30.html?s=singapore terrorism
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13. World War I (2004). Modern World History online. Retrieved July 9, 2015, from <http://online.infobase.com.libproxy.nlb.gov.sg/Auth/Index?aid=15961&itemid=WE53&articleid=45535>