

# LKYSPP 2025/2026 Sabbatical

by  
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This writeup describes my LKYSPP 2025/2026 sabbatical leave. The parameters differ from those of a traditional NUS sabbatical leave, as I understand it, although of course these do come in many different shapes and sizes.

I provide justification in this writeup for the choices I have made. I believe that what I have selected is the best way to achieve the goals of the sabbatical leave that I set out.

## 1 The Initial Plan

After I stepped down from the LKYSPP Deanship, NUS generously offered me a one-year sabbatical leave. I decided I would put that sabbatical towards three objectives:

1. Help craft, together with the School's leadership, a major new direction for the School's economics research, pointing in particular at how world order is evolving and the international economic system is changing along with it. I would do this while advancing my own academic scholarship and practitioner engagement in the area.
2. Design a new teaching module to leverage simultaneously academic scholarship and practitioner experience in dealing with economic and financial crises. This would take a hands-on approach that placed our Masters' students in policy-making (role-play) situations, where real-time decision-making would require them to draw on understanding of leading academic ideas. This would also incentive our students to both contextualize and learn more deeply the academic ideas I can best serve up for them.
3. To refresh the ideas on which I was already working and to discover new ones, by engaging with leading academics and practitioners around the world who have complementary and overlapping interests.

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I felt that these were appropriate goals after stepping down from the LKYSPD Deanship, and given that I have a significant runway still on which I can continue to serve the School.

## 2 Greater Effectiveness

My initial plan was to be based in Washington DC, where I already have good academic contacts at universities in the area, reinforced with close working relations that I have developed with researchers and practitioners in the area, not least at IMF, World Bank, and Peterson Institute of International Economics. All these institutions readily agreed when I informally raised the idea of my spending around six months with them.

As it turned out, I happened to be in Washington DC in July for a week for a key annual conference at the World Bank. From then I was able to look ahead and evaluate how my planned year would go. I quickly realized the bottleneck I would run into over the coming months: My research communications and work commitments explicitly focus on policy responses and public concerns in Southeast Asia (or Asia more broadly), not in the US or the Transatlantic region. Developments in and insights from the latter are certainly of great concern in my research and for the three objectives I lay out earlier. But for in-person daily engagement and the most pressing challenges, it is Asia that most benefits my research. But it is not only that I gain most, I discovered that is also that immediate perspective from Asia that is most appreciated by those around me in Washington DC (many of whom I am already in regular weekly or monthly touch on Zoom or other online meetings). My being in the West, therefore, would run the risk of degrading both the stock and the value of the human capital I carry.

The other thing I discovered from Washington, as I scanned my upcoming travel and engagement commitments, was that I would see both demand from interlocutors and benefit for my own work and ideas from frequent trips and engagements across vast expanses of Asia and Europe. It didn't matter where I was based; I would be constantly travelling.

To this end, therefore, I realized that for the duration of my sabbatical leave, most of the time I would be away, regardless of where I might happen to be officially based. I, therefore, decided that I would indeed go

away for sabbatical leave, but that going away was most efficiently done by continuing to be resident in Singapore. This way I did not have to set up a whole different address, residence, Internet service and other utilities, since wherever I might happen to do that to establish residence, I would be away anyway.

My sabbatical leave is, therefore, from 01 Aug 2025 through 31 Jul 2026, resident in Singapore.

### 3 Work travel and engagement

To confirm the reasoning I have given, the list of work travel I have done in this time is the following:

- Dialogue (with Thomas Hale, Financial Times, moderator; Taimur Baig, Managing Director and Chief Economist DBS). 2025. “Seizing Growth in a Disrupted Global Economy”, Financial Times Live-DBS *New Realities, New Possibilities* (16 Jul). Singapore
- Panel (with Justin Sandefur, moderator; Indermit Gill; Rachel Glennerster). 2025. “[Plenary Panel: Development in the Age of Populism](#)” video, World Bank ABCDE (22 Jul). Washington DC
- Quah, Danny. 2025. "Reviving Multilateralism", keynote address, World Bank ABCDE (22 Jul). Washington DC
- Panel (with Matteo Bugamelli, moderator; Masood Ahmed; Selina Ho; Xinquan Tu). 2025. "Reviving Multilateralism", World Bank ABCDE (22 Jul). Washington DC
- Panel (moderator; with Wendy Cutler; Muhamad Chatib Basri; Ravi Menon). 2025. “[The Fragmenting Global Economy](#)” video, IPS-SBF Conference *Global City Singapore: SG60 and Beyond* (29 Jul). Singapore
- Panel (with Nicholas Fang moderator; Nisha Biswal, Partner Asia Group; Michael Buchanan, Chief Macro Strategist, Temasek; and Kevin Wong, CEO Asia Pacific, SWIFT). 2025. “Understanding Geopolitics and Geoeconomics”, Singapore Institute of International Affairs

SIIA 17th ASEAN and Asia Forum *The Global Future and Challenges Ahead* (05 Aug). Singapore

- Quah, Danny. 2025. “Can the World Develop Without the Global North?”, lecture, 12th Institute of Public Policy International Conference *Reshaping Modernization: China and the Global South* (23 Aug). Guangzhou
- Panel (with Julia Tijaja), 2025. “Deepening Economic Integration, Expand Demand, and New Issues: Towards Coordination and Reforms in ASEAN”, ASEAN Geoeconomic Response Taskforce Track 1.5 Roundtable (25 Aug). Kuala Lumpur
- Quah, Danny. 2025. “Securing Multilateralism: Will Economics Work?”, Lecture, CAG-UCSD-University California Institute for Global Cooperation and Conflict workshop on Economics, Security, and Asian Regional Dynamics (02 Sep). Singapore.
- Quah, Danny. 2025. “Rewriting the Risk Map: Geopolitics in an Uncertain World”, Inaugural Global Directors Exchange (10 Sep). Singapore
- Quah, Danny. 2025. Ambassadors and German Parliamentarians speech: “Asian Perspectives on Economic and Trade Challenges”, Berlin Conference on Asian Security *Dreaming of Order, Wrestling for Power in a Trumpian World* (16 Sep). The Japanese Embassy in Germany, Berlin
- Moderator fireside with Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong. 2025. Asia Leaders Connect, Temasek (03 Oct), Singapore
- Panel (with Catherine Kho moderator, Nick Crawford, Deborah Elms) “Economic Fragmentation” (14 Oct), ASEAN-UK meeting on the ASEAN Geoeconomics Task Force report, Jakarta
- Quah, Danny. 2025. “Industrial Policy for Economic Growth and for Economic Statecraft” keynote lecture (07 Nov). Philippine Economic Society Annual Meeting and Conference. Makati City
- Quah, Danny. 2025. “Inadvertent Cooperation and Pathfinder Multilateralism for a G-minus World”, The Shin-ichi Ichimura Lecture and

Keynote Address (08 Nov) East Asian Economic Association conference, Makita City

- Quah, Danny. 2025. “Inadvertent cooperation and pathfinder multilateralism for a G-minus world” (17 Nov), KDI School-LKYSPP Joint Conference *Challenges and Policy Responses of Asian Countries Amid US-China Geopolitical Conflicts and the Trump 2.0 Era*, Seoul
- Oxford Union Debate “This House Would Rather Be Built By China Than Blessed by America” 2025 (22 Nov), Oxford
- Panel (with Alessio Patalano moderator, Lawrence Freedman, Lavina Lee, Ashok Malik). 2025. “Perspectives on a Fragmented World” (01 Dec). Third Indo-Pacific Conference, organized by the High Commissions of Australia, India, and Singapore, and the Centre for Statecraft and National Security, KCL *Rethinking Cooperation in a Fragmented World*, London
- Quah, Danny. 2025. “Inadvertent Cooperation in a G-minus World”, Lecture, LSE International Development (02 Dec), London
- Panel (Jia Qingguo moderator; John Ikenberry, Kiichi Fujiwara, Yu Tiejn, Jae-Seung Lee). 2025. “Postwar International Order and Its Future” (05 Dec). Five University Conference 2025 *Reconfiguring Global Order Amid Competitive Interdependence*. Peking University, Beijing
- Panel (with Johannes Wiegand moderator; Changneng Xuan, Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, Krishna Srinivasan, Jun Pan). 2025. “Macroeconomic and Financial Policy Research — Is Asia Different?” (08 Dec) IMF Shanghai Center Opening Ceremony and Research Seminar, Shanghai
- Panel (with Alyssa Ayres moderator; Cheng Li, Kellee Tsai, Shang-Jin Wei) 2025. “Competing Visions: US, China, and the New Rules of the Game” (11 Dec), The 17th Annual Conference on China’s Economic Development and US-China Economic Relations, *Global Impacts on the US-China Economic Relationship*, Hong Kong

- Panel (with Anthony Saich moderator; Yves Tiberghien, S. Chaturvedi, Broto Wardoyo) 2026. “The Big Splash: Trump 2.0 and the Global Order” (16 Jan) Second International Conference on Asia Visions and Voices, Taipei
- Panel (with Peter Loewen moderator; Rachel Beatty Riedl) 2026. “Is Democracy the Best Form of Government for the Future?” (28 Jan) *The Disagreement Series*, Cornell
- Panel (with Raline Shah moderator; HE Dyah Roro Esti Widya Putri, M. Arsjad Rasjid, Tengku Zafrul Aziz). 2026. “ASEAN’s Golden Decade: Turning Geopolitical Overload into Geoeconomic Opportunity” (10 Feb) Southeast Asian Futures Initiative Center (SEAFIC), Jakarta
- Panel (with Francis Quimba moderator; Liew Chin Tong, Marilyn Alarilla, Mari Pangestu, Patricia Holmes) 2026. “Framing Economic Security for ASEAN” (25 Feb), DTI Philippines Track 1.5 *ASEAN Economic Security: Context, Considerations, and Challenges*, Iloilo
- Panel (Robin Harding moderator; Chatib Basri, Keyu Jin, Aaditya Mattoo, Arvind Subramaniam) 2026. “Future of Growth in Asia” (05 Mar), IMF Asia in 2050, Bangkok
- Quah, Danny. 2026. “Asia’s Evolving Economic Landscape” keynote lecture (06 Mar), IMF Asia in 2050, Bangkok
- Panel (with Shaogang Zhang moderator; Mohd Faiz Abdullah, Fulin Chi, Yose Damuri, Jonathan Choi, Marty Natalegawa) 2026. “Unlocking the Greater Potential of RCEP” (25 Mar) Boao Forum, Hainan
- Panel (with Jianhai Lin moderator; Robert Koopman, Giovanni Tria, Yasuto Watanabe, Jiayi Zou) 2026. “World Economic Transformation: Asia’s Driving Force” (27 Mar) Boao Forum, Hainan
- Panel (with Maurice Obstfeld). 2026. “Toward the Post Modern World Economy, 2025–2029” keynote lecture by Maurice Obstfeld (01 Apr), Western Economic Association International Conference, Bangkok

- Panel (with Maurice Obstfeld). 2026. “Economic Statecraft and Asia’s Role in the Global Economy” keynote lecture by Danny Quah (02 Apr), Western Economic Association International Conference, Bangkok
- Panel (with Maurice Obstfeld moderator; Piti Disyatat, Ruta Duttagupta) “Asia and the World Economy in Times of Turbulence” (04 Apr), Western Economic Association International Conference, Bangkok

This list is obviously extensive and wide-ranging. For reasons described earlier in Section 2, I feel that my effectiveness has been optimized by my being in Singapore. At the same time the refresh and engagement on ideas compared to my original plan has not at all suffered in comparison.

## 4 Conclusion

This writeup has described my sabbatical leave plan, and how that changed to become a more effective year. The goals I described in Section 1 are close to completion. I am confident they will be done by July 2026, well before the end of my sabbatical leave.

I have also published and written a number of non-technical and technical articles, and committed to presenting the latter at a number of leading economic conferences. In addition, I have put together an outline of a broad new economic research strategy “[An LKYSP Economic Diplomacy Institute](#)”, that can be used either as a refresh of an already-established research center or as the beginnings of a new one. I am consulting with the School’s senior leadership on the best way forwards with this.