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Subject: (EMBARGOED) Speech by AP Ho Peng Kee, 25 Jun 99, 7pm

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY ASSOC PROF HO PENG KEE, MINISTER OF STATE FOR LAW AND HOME AFFAIRS AT THE  
PRESENTATION OF MHA EMPLOYERS AWARDS AT THE CIVIL DEFENCE ACADEMY AUDITORIUM ON 25  
JUN 99 AT 7.00 PM

Commissi oner, SCDF

Acting Commissi oner of Pol ice

Offi cers

Ladi es and Gentl emen:

Good evening.

First, let me extend a warm welcome to everyone to this Civil Defence Academy. This new modern complex is a testimony to the importance SCDF, indeed the entire Home Team, places on quality training.

2 Vegetius, a Roman military writer credited with creating authoritative works on warfare in the Middle Ages, once wrote these words:

Let him who desires peace prepare for war

3. What Vegetius wrote is still relevant today. In Singapore, we work on the principle that the only way to ensure we survive and maintain peace and harmony is to be ready for any crisis. However, safeguarding the nation in a crisis is not the responsibility of only the SAF, Police and Civil Defence. It is our responsibility – the responsibility of the whole community including you, the employers of our Police and Civil Defence National Servicemen. Hence, in the same way, we acknowledge the contributions of our Police and Civil Defence Nsmen and recognise model employers who support national service.

4. Over the past few years, bonds within the Home Team have grown stronger. Every department has internalised this spirit of cooperation and teamwork. Amongst departments there is greater synergy. Take tonight's event as an example. Previously, SCDF and Police recognised your contributions with separate awards. With strengthening of the Home Team identity, it is now timely to combine the two Awards. Tonight, all of you are deserving recipients of the new "MHA Award for Employers." Congratulations! We have combined the two Awards also with employers' convenience in mind. Employers will now fill up only one questionnaire and be interviewed by one panel comprising both SCDF and Police representatives.

5. We appreciate the sacrifices that you, as employers, have made by releasing your employees for National Service, even in the midst of an unfavourable economic situation. Thank you. With this in mind, we are inaugurating the Outstanding Employer's Award to honour employers who have consistently supported national service.

6. Just as you have demonstrated your commitment to us, the Home Team will reciprocate your commitment. For example, we will continually revise our training methods so that the duration for In-Camp training will be kept to a minimum, causing you the least manpower disruption. We are also constantly looking into ways of enhancing make-up pay procedures for our Nsmen.

7. In addition, a number of new initiatives have been introduced to make the most of the time that your staff serve with us. One such initiative in this new Civil Defence Academy is the installation of a number of custom-built simulators,

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which will reduce training time considerably. Through quality training, your employees will return to your company fitter in both mind and body. Many of you have seen for yourselves how your employees put mind and body to training at regular NS visits specially conducted for employers and spouses. Through these visits, employers and wives can better appreciate what their employees and husbands undergo during their in-camp training.

8. In tandem with this spirit, CDANS Country and Town Clubhouses and SPANS Town Clubhouse have extended their corporate membership to recipients of the Employers' Award. A new country clubhouse for Police NSmen is in the pipeline. It is expected to be ready in Jul 2001. On its part, CDANS Country Club is embarking on phase two of its development in July to enhance its facilities. This network of clubhouses will serve the recreational needs of our Home Team NSmen and promote interaction with regular officers. I am sure this gesture of opening up their clubhouses to employers is supported by PNSmen and CDNSmen. It will promote greater interaction between our NSmen and their employers.

9. Employers' support for our programmes and activities is important. We welcome feedback that will help us improve our system. Today's function is just a small way of saying thank you for your willing support of national service. Once again, thank you for coming and sharing time with us. I am sure your employees appreciate your presence. I wish all of you a pleasant evening.

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