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Subject: (Embargoed) Speech by Assoc Prof Ho Peng Kee, 8 Oct 99, 8PM

Singapore Government

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SPEECH BY ASSOC PROF HO PENG KEE, MINISTER OF STATE FOR LAW AND HOME AFFAIRS, AT THE
SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE AND SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICERS
PROMOTION CEREMONY, ON FRIDAY, 8 OCTOBER 1999, 8.00PM AT BUKIT BATOK CDANS COUNTRY
CLUBHOUSE AUDITORIUM

Good Evening,

Commissioner of Police,

Commissioner SCDF,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me first congratulate the 84 National Service Officers who are receiving their promotion certificates tonight. This promotion recognises your leadership qualities, performance and contributions to the Home Team.

2. For the Police, this is the first time that a PNSman is promoted to the rank of Superintendent. Indeed, two of you will attain this rank tonight. For the SCDF, a second CDNSman will be promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, the first having been appointed last year.

3 The Police and Civil Defence are delighted to have officers reaching these senior ranks. It not only means that we have good officers, but it also means that the NS orbat is attaining peak levels. NS officers and NS units here integrate well with their regular counterparts. NS units are well prepared for emergencies, even in peacetime. A good recent example is the trio of Civil Defence NS officers who joined our elite team of rescuers who went to the aid of Taiwanese earthquake victims. This experience demonstrates that we are up to the mark, and is an assurance to Singaporeans that they will be in safe hands, should such emergencies occur here. In the same vein, two PNS Contingent Commanders, recording a first for PNS officers, joined their regular counterparts in a Command & Staff Course, enduring a rigorous 12-day field leadership training stint in Nepal.

4 In 1995, SCDF started to re-organise and streamline its National Service Units to enhance their operational capability. This exercise was completed in 1997. Nsmen have been re-grouped into Rescue Battalions, Heavy Plant Battalions, Support Battalions, Medical Companies and Shelter Management Units. Now SCDF's NS units are leaner, fitter and more effective. They are all led by NS officers.

5 To leverage on the strengths of the different elements of the Force, new units such as the Immediate Response Units, integrating Nsmen and regulars, have also been formed. CD Volunteers will also be incorporated into Shelter Management Units to work alongside Nsmen. Nsmen are now proud to discharge their NS liability in the SCDF. They wear their uniform with pride.

6 As for the Police, the SPF initiated a re-organisation of its NS units five years ago to enhance the operational efficiency and readiness of PNSmen through greater specialisation and integration with their regular counterparts. This re-organisation is on-going and is progressing well.

7 PNSmen now operate in five specialist functional groups. They are the Service and Support Group, Strategic Reserve Group, Emergency Light Strike Force Squads, Patrol Reinforcement Group and NPP Reinforcement Group. With the implementation of the Neighbourhood Police Centre (NPC) system islandwide, the Patrol Reinforcement and NPP Reinforcement Groups will be progressively converted to NPC Reinforcement Troops. Nsmen are now trained to undertake specific tasks, and they do them well.

8 The formation of the National Service Key Installation or KINS Units is on schedule. These KINS PNSmen are trained to protect key installations. 26 units have been formed so far. Police is on track to achieving the target of 50 KINS troops by 2004.

9 National Servicemen are a crucial part of the Home Team. You bring with you experiences and knowledge of working in the private sector to complement the skills and knowledge of regular officers. Together you can help produce an even stronger safety and security system for our nation.

10 I would also encourage all of you to look beyond National Service obligations. You can take on leadership roles as Civil Defence Volunteers, in Civil Defence Executive Committees or as Voluntary Special Constabulary members.

11 To recognise NS contributions, the Home Team will continue to improve social and recreational facilities for NSmen and their families. Work on extending the CDANS Country Club has already begun. By September next year, CDANS members will have a 24-lane bowling alley and an international standard indoor air rifle range. In addition, Oct 19 this year will mark the beginning of yet another clubhouse for Home Team Nsmen. That day, a groundbreaking ceremony to launch the start of construction of the combined country clubhouse for PNSmen and Police junior officers will be held. The clubhouse will be ready by July 2001.

12 Let me conclude, by once again congratulating the Civil Defence and Police NS Officers who are being promoted. I am sure you will shoulder the new responsibilities that come with this promotion with pride and honour. I wish you all the best.

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