

# SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE

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TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
MR. A. RAHIM ISHAK, AT THE SIGLAP COMMUNITY CENTRE YOUTH  
GROUP'S ANNUAL BUFFET AND DANCE AT TAI SUN PARADISE RESTAURANT,  
488, UPPER EAST COAST ROAD, ON SAT., DEC. 17, 1977 AT 7.30 P.M.

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Youth is an important element in any country. This is especially so in Singapore which is almost devoid of natural resources and with an absence of an agricultural base. The latest statistics show us that about 78 per cent of our population is under the age of 40 with about 45 per cent under 19 years old. These are the people who would take over the helm of the country and act as modernizers and innovators in the decades to come. They will be the successors to leadership in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres, whether in the private or in the public sectors. How they will be groomed as leaders and as members of the work force would determine whether our youth would become an asset or a liability.

As we approach the 1980's there will be new problems and challenges with some of the old ones remaining with us. The main instrument in grooming and in character-building is the educational system. It must be geared to produce youth equipped not just with academic knowledge but also with positive values and attitudes towards work and society. They must be able to be aware, and understand both the internal as well as the external environments of Singapore in the 1980s.

Internally, we will probably see a technologically orientated society with young students armed with calculators and TV audiences at home watching and understanding the latest advances in scientific research and invention. These young men and women will be members of our labour team working to strengthen our industrial base and improving our role as a service centre. Urban living will become more demanding on our physiological make-up testing our responses and our patience to the utmost.

Externally, there ....2/-



Externally, there are prospects of a new economic order in which the industrialised countries would work out their economic relationship among themselves as well as their relationship with developing countries. For Singapore, we would probably face a global economy with severe competition for our goods. The search for new markets and the expansion of old ones will become more challenging.

Detente between the super powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, as in their talks over the demilitarisation of the Indian Ocean and Nuclear Arms Limitation, will also bring about its consequences. The roles of China and Japan in this region will also be of significance. In South-east Asia there will be growing confidence in the working relationship among members of Asean.

These are just some of the factors that youth in Singapore should constantly be aware of. In building Singapore into a cosmopolitan city with a global outlook, the next generation of leaders must not only be knowledgeable as technocrats with economic, managerial and entrepreneurial skills, but "political animals" who are tough-minded, alert and sensitive to both the internal and external environment.

I wish to congratulate Miss Jessie Ee, President of the Siglap community centre youth executive committee, officials and members of the committee for the hard work they have put in and the various achievements accomplished during 1977. Without any intention of flattery, I must in all sincerity say that you all have been most conscious of your objectives as youth leaders and most productive in your efforts. I hope that with equal imagination and determination you will plan for 1978 new activities to bring maximum benefit to the youths in Siglap constituency.

December 17, 1977.

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