

29 NOV 1993

# **Singapore Government PRESS RELEASE**

Media Division, Ministry of Information & The Arts, 36th Storey, PSA Building, 460 Alexandra Road, Singapore 0511. Tel 2799794/5

93-JS-10

Release No.: 13/NOV

11-1/93/11/09

**SPEECH BY PROF S JAYAKUMAR, MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND  
MINISTER FOR LAW, AT THE COMMISSIONING OF  
THE SPECIAL TACTICS AND RESCUE (STAR) UNIT  
AT THE POLICE TRAINING CAMP, MANDAI ROAD  
ON TUESDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 1993 AT 9.00 AM**

Many countries today are faced with soaring crime rates and a marked increase in the use of firearms to commit crimes. Criminals have become more organised, bolder, and more ready to resort to violence.

Amidst this trend, we in Singapore are fortunate to have a relatively low crime rate. But, we must guard against complacency or we would not be spared by the tide of violence and crime.

We have in place stringent laws to act as a strong deterrent to potential criminals. But these laws, by themselves, are not enough. They must be complemented by equally stringent enforcement, which requires a police force that is professional and forward-looking. Only then can we ensure that three million Singaporeans, plus the thousands of foreign workers and the six million tourists who visit Singapore each year, can continue to walk our streets without fear of being mugged or otherwise harmed.

Over the years, the Police have upgraded their capability to meet new challenges. Community policing, the Neighbourhood Police Posts, the installation of a Computerised Operations Room for better command and control, the re-organisation of Police Headquarters and its Land Divisions, and the formation of the Police Coast Guard are all examples of such Police on-going efforts to upgrade.

In September last year, the Special Operations Command was established as a unified command for specialist tactical units, including the Police Task Force. These specialist units equip Police with the means to respond swiftly and decisively in complex, high-tension situations.

The formation of a Special Tactics and Rescue Unit - or STAR - is another step forward by Police to stay ahead of the criminals. STAR's main contributions are two-fold. First, the Police will have a specialised ability to rescue people held by armed criminals and to capture dangerous criminals who barricade themselves. They will do this by using swift and decisive methods, characteristic of an elite special tactics team. Second, it lays the foundation for building specialist expertise and tactical excellence in the Police Force.

The officers of this elite STAR Unit have been through an arduous five-month selection and training process. They have received intensive training in the use of weaponry, explosives and other specialised skills. But this is only the beginning as they will continue to train and practise so as to hone their skills for a wide variety of crises scenarios.

I am confident that the officers of the STAR Unit will be equal to the challenges before them, and thereby contribute in no small measure towards Police's unending efforts in ensuring that Singapore remains a safe place for both Singaporeans and visitors alike.

It is now my pleasure to commission the Special Tactics and Rescue Unit.

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@