

SPEECH BY MR LIM GUAN HOC, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY, MINISTRY
OF HOME AFFAIRS FOR OPENING OF THE JOINT DEA/CNB DRUG ENFORCEMENT
TRAINING COURSE(On 7 April 1975 at 9.00 a.m. at Police Academy)

The government of Singapore has made its stand against drug abuse very clear. This government is in an all-out war against drug abuse. In 1974, 3,225 persons were arrested for drug offences. Of those arrested for cannabis offences, 84% were below 30 years of age. Of those arrested for methaqualone offences 95% were below 30 years of age. Of those arrested for heroin offences, 80% were below 30 years of age. Singapore cannot hope to be entirely immune from any drug which is being trafficked in this region. From what I have just said you will realise that our drug problem revolves mainly among our young citizens. We cannot and will not allow our young who represent the future of Singapore to be caught in the web of drug addiction.

2 In the last few months you have read much in the Press about the rehabilitation of drug abusers. The Drug Rehabilitation Centre at St. John's Island is being upgraded. Volunteers are being trained to counsel the drug abusers. Publicity has been given on the dangers of drug abuse. All this is important but insufficient. Enforcement of the drug laws must also be efficient. We have changed our drug laws in the face of a constantly developing problem, we must now make sure that it is efficiently administered. The Misuse of Drugs Act, 1973 provides for very severe penalties, it will be fully made use of - it will not be a mere showpiece for other countries to see.

3 Singapore is in a very vulnerable position, being so close to the Golden Triangle Area where most of the world's illicit narcotic supplies come from. This region is where drug traffickers are all looking at eagerly now. We can expect newcomers to the "drug trafficking game" all the time. We can also expect that the modus operandi of the drug trafficking syndicates will become increasingly sophisticated. It would be very unrealistic, therefore, for the government enforcement agencies to be operating as they did ten years ago. It would be like the stone-age man trying to fight modern-age man. We must continually strive for better expertise. The importance of surveillance work and undercover operations cannot be over-emphasized. A well-armed and well-trained enforcement agency will be well-equipped to whack the drug trafficking syndicates. We must bring down the supply of illegal drugs to the minimum.

4 Today I am happy to note that "international co-operation" is not a mere phrase thrown around at international conferences. I want to thank the Drug Enforcement Administration of the United States for sending over the lecturers to share their expertise. Singapore is the fourth largest port in the world and has an excellent communications system. It can therefore be expected that international drug syndicates would want to use Singapore as a staging post. This must not be allowed. Singapore will do all it can to intercept illicit drugs that are in transit to other countries.

5 We will co-operate with other countries, wherever necessary and possible, in this fight against drugs.

6 In closing, I would like to advise the trainees to imbibe as much as possible of what will be taught as you will be doing valuable work for the country and the world community, - saving people from the perils of drug addiction. In the final analysis, enforcement must necessarily play a very important role in the overall effort to wipe out the drug problem.

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