

SAF DAY MESSAGE FROM DR GOH KIENG SWEE, THE
MINISTER OF DEFENCE, ON 1ST JULY 1975

This year, Singapore celebrates her tenth anniversary as an independent nation. In this brief period, we have achieved much in industrial expansion, public housing, education and defence.

We were fortunate that we were able to finance the defence buildup from two infantry battalions, consisting mostly of non-citizens, to our present state without having to impose additional taxes. This was possible because the economy grew at a very rapid rate and government revenues increased even faster. While the financial burden was easily borne, the manpower requirement could be met only by introducing full time national service.

This meant, for Singapore's youths, compulsory two to two and a half years of soldiering. Those intending to go for higher studies have to delay their plans by two years. So the young men bear the real burden of defence, as has been the case with all countries.

The recent collapse in Indochina has shown that the decision to build up our defence was the right one. If that decision was not taken, Singapore would be in a weak unprepared state. Confidence of businessmen and investors would be shaken beyond repair. The prosperity that we have achieved over the decade could crumble overnight.

While the SAF can take some satisfaction, even pride, in its contribution to the national wellbeing, it must not slacken in its efforts to reach higher standards of performance in all arms and services. We have yet a long way to go.

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