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Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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ADDRESS BY PROF S JAYAKUMAR,

MINISTER FOR LAW AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

AT THE REDEDICATION CEREMONY

FOR AYER RAJAH/BUKIT MERAH AT SCIENCE HUB, SCIENCE PARK ON THURSDAY, 1 JULY 1999 AT
10.30 AM

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen,

National Archives of Singapore

We are gathered here today to mark the 12th SAF Day Rededication Ceremony. I am heartened to see the strong turnout of NSmen and employers. Your presence here underlines your dedication and commitment towards Singapore's national defence. For your families and friends, your presence is a reaffirmation that you will always be ready to safeguard their security.

2 Last year, we spoke of regional uncertainties resulting from the economic crisis which no one had foreseen.

3 Singapore has weathered the crisis well. Elsewhere in the region, we are also starting to see signs of economic recovery. However, the pace of

recovery among countries in the region is uneven.

4 The economic crisis had brought about, especially in the past year, significant political changes within these countries. The political landscape of the region has changed dramatically. A benign security environment cannot be taken for granted.

5 Against this backdrop, the SAF stands as a pillar of strength. It provides the necessary deterrence against aggression, and allows Singapore to pursue diplomacy in a calm and firm manner. It is the cornerstone of our ability to secure peace.

6 The SAF has come a long way since its humble beginnings. It is now a well-established organisation, equipped with well-trained soldiers and superior equipment. It stands out today as a modern and forward-looking armed force in the region. It is recognised for its prompt and effective response during real-life contingencies. This has been possible because of two key factors, namely the Government's commitment to defence, and the commitment of our NSmen to the task of national defence.

7 The Government remains committed to maintaining steady defence expenditure. Last year, the defence budget remained unchanged despite government belt-tightening as a result of our economic slowdown. This allowed Singapore to build up its cutting-edge military capability and have a credible deterrence given these uncertain times. It is also necessary investment for national security well into the future.

8 But more important than any state-of-the-art military hardware is the level of commitment to our defence by those who use it.

9 You have heard from the Singapore 21 Vision, that every Singaporean matters. This in essence has been the same philosophy behind National Service. Every member enlisted has contributed in his own way towards its cause. The present success of the SAF is due to your commitment and dedication to the task of national defence over the years. Your positive contribution has allowed the SAF to grow from strength to strength.

10 As Singapore develops as a nation, we need to nurture and continue to maintain these same values and attitudes. No amount of superior equipment will improve the SAF if our people are not committed and dedicated to the defence of Singapore.

11 Our NSmen have shown strong commitment in their training. They turn up regularly for training and mobilisations. They are prepared to risk their lives to defend Singapore. They are confident in the SAF's capability to defend Singapore. These are vital attitudes that undergird our deterrence capability, and stand us in good stead. We must continue to carry them forward.

12 We recognise that National Service requires sacrifice from our NSmen, their families and employers. MINDEF and the SAF are constantly exploring ways to improve National Service. Regular sessions with employers to promote understanding will also continue. These steps have facilitated our NSmen to maintain their commitment to the defence of Singapore.

13 Singaporeans must be ready at all times to defend Singapore. There is no second chance if the SAF fails. It is the combination of the commitment of our people, vigorous training and technological capability that has led to the success of the SAF. I am confident that the SAF remains fully ready to defend Singapore at all times.

National Archives of Singapore

14 Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Government and people of Singapore, I thank all of you for your loyal support and valuable contribution towards national defence. Your commitment and will to defend Singapore forms the bedrock of our national security. Singapore enjoys continued prosperity because your sacrifices have made the critical difference.

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