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SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENTMC.MAR.40/68(ISTANA)

SPEECH BY ACTING PRESIDENT, MR. P. COOMARASWAMY
AT THE COMMISSIONING CEREMONY OF OFFICER CADETS
AT 7.00 P.M. ON 20TH MARCH, 1968 AT THE ISTANA.

EMBARGO TILL AFTER DELIVERY.
PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY."

Today, on behalf of the people of Singapore I will be presenting Commissions to 106 Officer Cadets who have successfully completed the 2nd Infantry Officer Cadets' Course at the Singapore Armed Forces Training Institute.

I wish to congratulate all of you who are being commissioned today. Your commission marks the completion of a rigorous period of training and it is the official testimony of your qualification to be Officers. You must bear in mind that to be an Officer is a great privilege, as you have been chosen by the Nation to sustain its dignity and defend its sovereignty. I have not the least doubt that all of you will at all times loyally and diligently discharge your duty and serve the Nation honourably.

Your Oath of Allegiance is sacred. It represents a lasting obligation of service in the defence of the Nation and its Constitution. You must be truly dedicated and believe in what you do, for unless you have this strong sense of dedication and service together with the capacity and strength to overcome obstacles, you will not be able to discharge your obligation with diligence and conviction.

Your personal conduct must be above reproach. Every act and deed of yours must be such that you thereby earn the respect of your fellow officers, your men and the community.

We are living in times of technological advance. You should never be complacent, but must always be prepared to learn new techniques, to adopt and adapt whatever is of benefit to the Armed Forces as a whole and consistent with the training and discipline you have received. Modern weapons and equipment call for highly trained Officers who must be ready to develop in themselves the capacity to pick up new skills quickly. This calls for a certain degree of versatility and flexibility, but the governing factor is initiative.

All of you are expected to be leaders of men and a vital force in the community. As leaders you must understand the Nation's problems and needs. You can only be good leaders if your men have confidence in you — confidence in your integrity, in your professional skills, in the wisdom of your orders, however swiftly decided and issued.

All these intangibles go to make the image formed day by day in the minds of men as they observe you. The art of leadership and the art of command, whether the forces be large or small, is the art of organisation and of human relations. Only the Officer who dedicates his thoughts and energies in his men can convert them into an efficient and disciplined fighting force. There must exist a thriving mutual confidence between the leader and his men, an attribute commonly known as *Espirit de Corps*. Each one of you must generate this spirit. It can only be achieved by fair play, mutual respect and understanding, by recognising individual worth and dignity, and by inspiring the feeling of fellowship and pride. The essential element of leadership is self-discipline, for only those who have disciplined themselves can exact disciplined performance from others.

At this memorable ceremony each of you will receive your Commissioning Certificate and a sword symbolising your status as an officer. The ceremony takes place in the presence of the representatives of Government and of Parliament, the Judiciary, the Civil Service, the law enforcement officers, the armed forces, among whom are the officers who trained you, the religious bodies and above all your parents. All present here, together with the citizens who are not here, constitute the Nation, which in the words of the Commission you are about to receive, has Special Trust and Confidence in your Patriotism, Courage and Good Conduct. You must prove yourself worthy of that Special Trust and Confidence.

MARCH 20, 1968.

Issued at 1500 hours