

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENTMC/FEB/16/71 (H.A.)

SPEECH BY MR. L.P. RODRIGO, PARLIAMENTARY
SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AT THE
PASSING-OUT PARADE OF THE 2ND SINGAPORE
INFANTRY BRIGADE AT BASIC MILITARY TRAINING
CAMP I, BEDOK, ON SATURDAY, 20TH FEBRUARY,
1971 AT 5.00 P.M.

I am glad to be here this evening to review another Parade of National Servicemen who are passing out of basic military training.

I am informed that you have acquitted yourselves commendably, and in particular, your performance in the inter-company skill at arms and inter-company drill competitions in which you matched experienced soldiers. Some of you are intended for the Section Leaders Course.

All of us who attend these parades and witness the results of merely six months of training by our youth cannot but feel meaningfully reassured.

At the end of the year, the security of the nation falls squarely on our own Armed Forces - defence arrangements with other countries notwithstanding. This is the burden of sovereignty which you, as citizens, must undertake with unmitigated pride, unflinching loyalty and undoubted skill.

Some years ago, when National Service came into force and the Government began spending large sums of money on building our Armed Forces, the reactions from certain quarters in our society ranged from mild criticisms to gnashing of teeth.

Today when these same quarters have realised how our defence potential has underpinned our economy as they enjoy the fruits of this present growth and as they see the end of 1971 approach, I am sure that the suppressed reactions in these quarters range from self-reproachfulness to sheer relief.

After basic training, you will go through more military experiences which will equip you with all the requisite skill and discipline of a useful citizen-soldier. You will find much to learn and indeed you will learn a great deal of the military world and its organisation. As you progress through your training, I hope you will

be imbued with the values and traditions of the Singapore Armed Forces, which in more ways than one, will everlastingly be the sinews of our society.

For obvious reasons the Armed Forces hold an important position in the affairs of the nation, and its members earn the praise and esteem of the people. To excel in military training is to vindicate the hopes of the nation. To deliberately fall short of in the training for the defence of one's country so as to avoid being committed to its defence is, I think, the ultimate in personal debasement and the nation's shame.

In all your endeavour I urge you to aspire to be the best in the field and receive your country's gratitude and admiration.

I congratulate you for your achievement hitherto and wish you good luck for the future.

DATED: FEBRUARY 20, 1971.

TIME ISSUED: 1030 HOURS.
