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SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

SPEECH BY PROF. WONG LIN KEN, MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS,
AT ANNUAL PARADE OF SPECIAL CONSTABULARY AT POLICE
ACADEMY ON SATURDAY, 2ND OCTOBER 1971 AT 5.30 P.M.

Welfare of the community and of all the citizens is the foundation and basic responsibility of any law enforcement unit. Protection of the rights of the individual as well as his property is also a concurrent and essential part of the responsibility shouldered by all civil servants.

Community welfare, however, is not alone the responsibility of the law enforcement, welfare, or other social service. It is also the responsibility of all citizens of the community to take steps as necessary in their own behalf. National Service in the Special Constabulary provides the means by which members of the community are mobilized to enlarge the effort of our nation to maintain law and order. Defence of country and the maintenance of law and order are the two most essential services organised by any society. On their success depend the development of civilization. National Service in the Special Constabulary is, therefore, just as important as serving full-time in the Singapore Armed Forces. While the armed forces have always been glamorized in the public eye, the role of National Servicemen in the Special Constabulary has never been underestimated. Indeed, in spite of rapid urbanisation, our crime rate has been relatively stable, without any significant increase in the size of our regular Police Force. This is because of the contribution made by the National Servicemen in the Special Constabulary. Equally important is the contribution made by the volunteer component of the Special Constabulary, small as their numbers are.

We are, every day, in a state of war against crimes. The Special Constabulary started as a second line of defence against the law breakers. Their role has been supplementary to the law enforcement effort of the regular policemen. A sense of isolation developed, affecting morale, despite the wishes of the Special Constabulary to be identified with the regular Police Force. The old uniforms and the non-supply of arms were symbols of this isolation. This was not in the

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interest of the community. So, steps were taken to end this sense of separation. Officers and men are now wearing the blue uniform of the regular police, and are armed with revolvers during duty. These are the significant changes that have taken place since my last review of the Special Constabulary. The Ministry of Home Affairs will now look into the possibilities on how the Special Constabulary can be organized and entrusted with greater responsibility to prevent crime.

The regular Police Force will also be trained to meet the crime problem of an urbanizing society. Both uniformed and plainclothes members of the Force will be trained in the FBI style of shooting - a style of shooting that means faster draw, more accuracy, and usually fatal. In the first phase, the detectives and security officers will be trained. Then, will follow the uniformed branches. In future, any criminal who draws out a lethal weapon against members of the Police Force must consider the possibility that it may be the last time he handles the weapon.

As we mobilize the Police and the Special Constabulary into greater efficiency against crime, it is important that the public should give every co-operation. Equally important, the Police and the Special Constabulary should conduct themselves in an exemplary manner. The combat against crime is a collective effort. Neither rude behaviour by members of the Force and Special Constabulary, nor unfair and malicious complaints from the public will help towards the realization of this communal effort.

Before I conclude, I wish to congratulate the winners of the 3 trophies.

Date: 2nd October, 1971.