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SPEECH BY MR BERNARD CHEN, MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE,
AT THE AETI GRADUATION CEREMONY AT THE AIR ENGINEERING
TRAINING INSTITUTE, CHANGI ON 28 JULY '79 AT 4.00 PM

Today's graduation ceremony for the Air Engineering Training Institute (AETI) marks the end of basic training of 173 technicians. Amongst these are 30 women technicians. May I congratulate all graduates who have successfully completed the technical training course and are now poised to put that training into practice in the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF).

Your entry to the RSAF comes at an appropriate time. The AETI was set up in 1972 to provide the training of technicians and mechanics to service the RSAF. In the past several years, the output of technicians and mechanics from AETI was able to keep up with the demands of our expanding Air Force. RSAF is still growing and we will need more technicians to maintain the aircraft, especially in special areas such as airframes, engines, avionics communication and electronics. Graduates of AETI can look forward to a busy but nevertheless rewarding career in the RSAF.

To meet the future needs of the RSAF, plans have been drawn up to expand the training facilities of AETI to take in more students. Such training is not wasted for even if the RSAF demand can be met, there is more than enough room in the private sector to absorb the skilled technicians trained in AETI. At the same time, AETI is also revising and updating its training syllabi to keep up with the changing requirements of the Air Force. This requires painstaking effort and greater co-operation between AETI and the RSAF in order to reduce the wastage caused by irrelevant training.

In addition to training requirements for the Air Force, AETI will also be expanding its facilities to cater for private industrial requirements, especially in the aerospace, electrical and electronic industries. A programme is now being prepared to set aside up to

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100 places in the AETI to train employees of companies engaged in aerospace related industries. The training courses for this class of trainees will be specifically tailored to these industries and will not duplicate the efforts of other training institutions. It is my sincere hope that the AETI management will rise to the occasion to meet the new challenges ahead. I have every confidence that given the renewed sense of purpose and commitment, the Institute staff will be able to fulfil the objectives set out for them.

To those of you who will be serving the RSAF, I can only add that there are ample opportunities for you if you are prepared to work hard for a satisfying career. There are also in-service as well as oversea courses available for you should you wish to upgrade your skills. Your career in the RSAF will be that much more promising if you acquire more skills. It remains for me to wish you all a successful and happy career with the RSAF.

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