

# SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE

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Acc. No.	NARC	SPEECH BY MR. CHIN HARN TONG, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR ALJUNIED AT THE NATIONAL DAY OBSERVANCE CEREMONY AT AIWA/ATLAS BRANCH OF SINGAPORE INDUSTRIAL LABOUR ORGANISATION ON 10 AUGUST '78 AT 8.30 AM	
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This morning we are gathered once again in a ceremony to honour the National Day. As such, the ceremony itself is a symbolical celebration of the National Day; just as the National Day itself is a symbolical remembrance of the existence of our nationhood.

The danger of the symbolical nature of this ceremony is that we may easily lose sight of the real purpose or reason for the ceremony, just as we may easily overlook the real significance of nationhood. In the course of time this ceremony may become a routine function, which is observed for the sake of observing. Let us hope that this ceremony will never degenerate into a routine affair, as it can but only obscure the significance of nationhood.

In celebrating the National Day we are not merely rejoicing simply because it is a public holiday, a day in which we do not have to work. The significance of our nationhood is that we have the freedom to decide our destiny. With such freedom is associated the responsibility to safeguard our own destiny. Many new nations have made the tragic mistake of assuming independence to be the end of the matter. On the contrary, nationhood means we have to care for ourselves, because there is no one else to solve our difficulties for us.

One of the fundamental obligations of nationhood is the need to defend ourselves. That is why we have national service in order to train and prepare our citizens to defend Singapore. Another obligation of our nationhood is the need to look after our own health. That is why we have to maintain an efficient health system with proper facilities to look after those who are sick. But to man

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such a system we require the personnel. Recently, you would have heard about the controversy of medical students objecting to the signing of the bonds, which require them to serve the public for a few years after their graduation. But against the natural desire of doctors to make as much money as possible for themselves, we have to balance the wider need of the public to receive proper medical attention as economically as possible. Similarly, our nationhood imposes an obligation for us to work as hard as possible in order that we may be able to earn enough foreign exchange to pay for our imports. It should never be forgotten that Singapore is very much dependent on imports for its very existence.

In that sense, what you do or fail to do in your place of work has a great bearing on the Singapore economy. To appreciate this fact, it is necessary that you know and understand what kind of industry you are working in and how such industry is helping the Singapore economy. Whether we like it or not, we can help or hurt our fellow Singaporeans by what we choose to do or not to do.

We should, therefore, remember on the occasion of our National Day that we are part of a large family. If we are to continue living and working as one family which is known by the name of Singapore, it is necessary that we should continue to live and work with a united purpose. If we are to pander to our self-centred desires and to forget our collective, national interest, that will be the end of our enlarged family life, namely Singapore. So long as we continue to work and co-operate with one another, we should be able to celebrate our National Day for many more years to come.

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