

## Singapore Government

**PRESS RELEASE**

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SPEECH BY MR CHIN HARN TONG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (HOME AFFAIRS), MP FOR ALJUNIED AND ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY OF SILO AT THE NATIONAL DAY OBSERVANCE CEREMONY AT UNION CARBIDE (S) PTE LTD ON TUESDAY, 11 AUGUST 1981 AT 9.30 AM

This morning we are gathered here once again for a ceremony to commemorate the Independence of Singapore. The ceremony may be simple, but it is of great significance to us, Singaporeans.

National independence is not and should not be a matter which we remember only once a year on National Day. It is an invaluable asset which is worth and needs our continuous efforts to safeguard and defend it from being lost. To put it another way, it is our duty and our privilege to fight to prevent the loss of our independence. This duty and privilege to safeguard the independence of our country is presently best effected by working together as a team. If we Singaporeans are not able to work together in the interest of Singapore, we cannot reasonably and justifiably expect others to look after our interest and welfare.

A real danger is that we may lose our independence through complacency and unnecessary confrontation among ourselves. This may happen if we are to become so irresponsible as to make it impossible for Singapore to continue as a viable economic entity; independence is not only a political but also an economic fact. To survive as an independent republic, Singapore must be able to pay its own way in a world where true charity hardly exists. In other words, Singapore must be able to pay for the things it needs for its existence by earning the necessary foreign exchange through its own efforts. As management and workers in the industrial sector, we are in the forefront of the battle for survival and success. Singapore must be able to sell its goods and services in a highly competitive world in order to be able to earn the foreign exchange to buy food and raw materials that are vital for

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our continued existence. It should never be forgotten that Singapore has to import most of the goods needed for its survival.

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

Both workers and management must respond to the call of national interest. After all, national interest means the interest of everyone who chooses to work and reside in Singapore. For the workers, national interest must include the interest of their employers. For the management, national interest must mean also the interest of their workers.

I have every hope, with both the management and the workers having a proper understanding of the national interest, that they will continue to work in close co-operation and understanding with one another. It is, therefore, appropriate on the occasion of National Day to reaffirm our belief in team work, co-operation and unity as a basis for ensuring our continued progress and prosperity.

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