

22 SEP 1986

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

Information Division, Ministry of Communications & Information, City Hall, Singapore 0617 · Tel. 3307269 / 3307270 / 3307271

86-CHT-3

Release No.: 23/SEP

11-3/86/09/08

**SPEECH BY MR CHIN HARN TONG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY
SECRETARY (HOME AFFAIRS), AT THE 61ST CONVENTION OF
THE WORLD ASSOCIATION OF DETECTIVES
AT THE ROYAL PAVILION BALLROOM,
PAVILION INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL
ON MONDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 1986 AT 9.30 AM**

It is an honour for the Singapore members of the World Association of Detectives to host this 61st Annual Convention. I understand that this is the first time that the Convention is held in Singapore and this has been made possible by the enthusiastic support from the W.A.D. members. I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all the distinguished delegates who have come thousands of miles from all corners of the world to attend this Convention, and also to congratulate the organisers in Singapore on their effort in hosting this event.

It is true that the Police has core responsibility of maintaining law and order, preventing and detecting crime and investigating offences. At the same time, however, this task cannot be discharged effectively by the Police acting ALONE and relying solely on its own limited manpower resources. It is obvious that the Police cannot be everywhere all the time. Over the last two decades or so, Police Forces all over the world have, therefore, consciously sought to win public support and cooperation in the fight against crime. A variety of community-based programmes of policing have been launched with the important objective of getting the community to join hands with the Police to fight crime. I am happy to note the Republic of Singapore Police is no exception - it, too, has over the last seven to eight years, made great advances in the area of community policing.

It is not my intention today to digress into the areas of community policing. The remarks that I have made merely serve to show that the efforts of the Police must be supported and complemented by the community at large and by community-based organisations and other specialised agencies which provide private security and investigative services.

In the Singapore context, the activities of the private security guard and investigation agencies are governed by the provisions of the Private Security and Investigation Agencies Act 1973. Agencies which provide such services and their employees - ie the security guards and the private investigators - are licensed by the Police. This ensures that only persons of sound character are engaged in such activities and that certain minimum standards are maintained. There are 82 licensed agencies which provide security services, thirteen licensed investigators who conduct investigation and 69 other agencies which provide both services. Many of these agencies are members of ALSIA, the Association of Licensed Security and Investigation Agencies.

The security agencies in Singapore play a very useful role in preventing crime in certain areas. They provide a range of security services and offer security protection in many industrial and commercial premises against housebreaking, theft, vandalism and other crimes. Such protection has proved to be effective; statistics show that premises which are guarded are less likely to attract criminal visitors. For example, 80 per cent of industrial premises that were broken into last year did not employ security guards. Hence, even though the Police cannot be present at all places at all times, these premises are well protected by security agencies.

This illustrates how private agencies can complement the efforts of the police in crime prevention.

While the provisions of security services features more prominently among the activities of the security and private investigation agencies in Singapore, there is nevertheless a significant number of agencies which provide investigative services. Their services are demanded by different sectors of the population - from the private individual who has personal or matrimonial problems to the large corporation which has to protect its copyright interests. The legwork and other efforts of the private investigators or detectives help to establish the factual basis on which their clients can take the proper course of action. I have no doubt that the delegates from overseas have also played similar role in their own countries.

Through their investigations, private investigators or detectives can and do make a positive contribution to society. The work of a private detective is a meaningful one. At the same time, it is also full of challenges. Like his police counterpart, he is essentially concerned with the search for truth so that justice may be properly administered. He has to have keen powers of observation and an analytical mind. He has to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to meet difficult and sometimes daunting tasks. However, ability and expertise alone are not sufficient. More importantly, a private detective has to possess the honesty and integrity of character and an unwavering objectivity in his work. Otherwise, the search for truth will not be possible. To be a true professional who would bring honour to this profession, a private detective has to combine fine qualities of character and a strong sense of justice with ability and expertise.

I am very pleased that the Association has chosen 'Continuing Professional Education' as the theme for this Convention. I am also much heartened by the enthusiastic participation by so many members of the Association. It reflects your sense of professionalism and your commitment

in developing this professionalism further. I am confident that the plenary sessions and workshops during this Convention will provide many opportunities for the exchange of knowledge and experience. This Convention will certainly serve to upgrade your professional status and expertise. May I wish all of you many fruitful sessions of deliberations. I also wish the foreign delegates a pleasant and interesting stay in Singapore. It is now my pleasure to declare open this 61st Convention of the World Association of Detectives.

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