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SPEECH BY MR CHIN HARN TONG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY,  
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AT THE SECUREX '87 - SECURITY AND  
SAFETY: THE CHANGING TRENDS AND STANDARDS - CONFERENCE AND  
EXHIBITION AT MARINA MANDARIN SINGAPORE ON SATURDAY  
18 JULY 1987 AT 9.30 AM

It gives me great pleasure this morning to officiate at the opening ceremony of the SECUREX '87 Conference and Exhibition. I must at the outset congratulate the Association of Licensed Security and Investigation Agencies or ALSIA for taking the initiative in bringing this significant event to Singapore. It is heartening to note that ALSIA has in recent years played an active role in attempting to upgrade professional standards through an exchange of ideas and experience. I recall that in 1986, ALSIA had organised another such significant event - the Conference of the World Association of Detectives.

It is most encouraging to note that the zeal for improvement has not waned. I believe that this enthusiasm is greatly enhanced by the awareness of the industry's need to upgrade skills and development. This awareness is important for two main reasons. The first is to ensure that the survival of the trade is not at stake. The second reason is to ensure that the welfare and safety of the people are not endangered.

Today, I would also like to take this opportunity to stress the importance of the security industry in helping the police to fight crime. The basic responsibility for the prevention of crime and the protection of life and property is that of the Police. However, it must be obvious to all that, this is not a responsibility which can be effectively

discharged by the Police acting alone and placing reliance purely on its own limited manpower resources. The Police cannot be everywhere all the time. It is therefore now widely recognised that this is a responsibility that the Police must share with the community at large and, more specifically, with security-related private organisations such as ALSIA. There are presently some 167 private investigation and security guard agencies in Singapore. Some 68 of these provide both security guard and investigation services, some 86 provide only security guard services and 13 provide only investigation services. All in all, these agencies employ about 9,000 security guards who are hired out to guard a wide variety of premises such as shopping centres, office buildings, factories and warehouses. It is therefore clear that private agencies have a significant role in the prevention of crime and the protection of property. This role can be strengthened through a continual upgrading of professional standards. It is in this context that conferences such as SECUREX '87 are important. Private security agencies in Singapore can benefit through an exchange of experience and ideas with delegates from other countries.

Private security agencies in Singapore have both formal and informal links with the Police. The formal links are stipulated in legislation. The informal links take the form of dialogue between the Police and ALSIA. I would like to see frequent dialogue sessions between the private sector and the law enforcement agencies so as to achieve a higher level of co-ordination. This would contribute to a higher level of safety in terms of law and order.

I notice from the programme that a wide range of issues would be discussed in the course of the conference. Among them are issues such as security and safety and copyright laws. These are important topics and dynamic areas which one can explore. I am sure that the delegates

will find the discussion very useful. Delegates would be aware that the business of private security agencies is very labour extensive - such agencies in Singapore already employ some 9,000 security guards. ALSIA must therefore constantly focus its attention on how manpower requirements can be reduced through greater reliance on alarm systems, closed-circuit TV and other more sophisticated equipment. This is of great importance to Singapore as our manpower resources are limited and every possible economy must be exercised in manpower utilisation. I have no doubt that SECUREX '87 will bring about a greater awareness of how the use of better equipment can reduce manpower requirements without compromising standards of security. This is a direction in which ALSIA must consciously move.

I wish your conference every success and I am confident that your deliberations would yield results leading to better cooperation and further progress in the society.

I now declare the Securex '87 Conference & Exhibition open.

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