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SPEECH BY MR CHUA SIAN CHIN, MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS
AND EDUCATION, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF TOA PAYOH
POLICE STATION, LORONG 4, TOA PAYOH ON POLICE DAY,
3 JUNE 1977 AT 0800 HOURS

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This new Toa Payoh Station built in the midst of Toa Payoh Estate signifies a new concept in the siting of new Police Divisional Headquarters Stations. The plan is to build a new Police Station in every satellite town namely Jurong Town, Ang Mo Kio Estate, Bedok New Town, Telok Blangah Estate and Woodlands New Town. In Line with this, the existing 8 Police Divisional boundaries will be redrawn and 2 new Divisions will eventually be created.

This is to meet the tremendous transformation that has taken place in Singapore, in terms of physical development, major shifts of population and new modes of living in highrise apartments. This transformation will continue into the 1980s when in the next 5 to 7 years, 160,000 more units of HDB flats will be built, resulting in about 75% of our total population living in Housing Board estates. Apart from the Orchard Road and Central Police Stations covering the business districts and tourist areas and Jurong Police Station covering the industrial township of Jurong, the rest of the Divisional Police Headquarters will be situated in the midst of highrise HDB estates.

This deliberate policy of making the Police Divisional Headquarters as the focal point of a large Housing Board estate was the result of a careful study of the behavioral trends of the residents as well as the crime patterns that are emerging in these highrise estates. Such location provides certain operational and psychological advantages. They are:

- (1) It provides at the doorstep of a large HDB Estate police service and other forms of assistance within the wider meaning of community service;
- (2) This police presence in the neighbourhood serves as a psychological boost to the residents and so strengthens their confidence on the forces of law and order;
- (3) This together with the frequent movement of police personnel in the estate helps to create an environment conducive to peace and good order; and
- (4) A Headquarter Station situated in the midst where the bulk of the population resides provide the public on the one hand with easy access to the police and, on the other the police can speedily respond to public calls for assistance and prompt investigation.

The factors which I have enumerated pertain mainly to the fostering of good police/public co-operation and the creation of an environment conducive to the maintenance of law and order. Indeed they form an indispensable part of our new overall strategy of combatting and preventing crime in our highrise estates. Any form of policing adopted for highrise residential blocks including verticle patrols using walkie-talkies will be inadequate without the active co-operation of the residents. Even by mobilising the whole manpower resources of our National Servicemen both full-time and part-time, including the SCNS and VCs in the Community Security Force for patrolling, it is not possible to physically cover all our highrise blocks during the crime-prone hours.

Our new Neighbourhood Policing Scheme which was introduced in HDB estates proves the point. The Scheme was effective and successful because the patrolling teams were able to establish close rapport with the residents. Under the Scheme, the over 3,000 Special Constables were divided into Neighbourhood Policing Units each comprising 120 men. Each Unit was given charge of a particular neighbourhood being made up of an average of 40-60 residential HDB blocks. This is to enable them to get familiar with the neighbourhood and the residents there. The Scheme has been extended to 28 neighbourhoods. They have achieved an average of 29 crime-free nights per month in all neighbourhoods which they patrolled. This includes all 4 neighbourhoods in Toa Payoh

In the fight against crime the importance of close rapport and co-operation between the public and the police cannot be over-emphasised. By coming forward with information, members of the public can assist the Divisional Police in their investigation of crime as well as help them plan more effective patrol strategies. The Police on the other hand can help residents with advice of how to take simple measures to protect their own homes. Protecting homes not only include installing strong locks and window grilles but also getting into mutual arrangements with neighbours to keep an eye on each other's flats when one is away. During the last 6 months (Nov 76 to Apr 77) out of a total of 168 HDB flats broken into, 134 or 80% were unattended. The most favoured time of housebreakers in HDB estates is the period between 7.30 am to 10.30 am when housewives go marketting and 2 pm to 5 pm when most people are at work.

A new system of crime detection and prevention must be evolved in our new highrise HDB estates that will be relevant in the 1980s and beyond. We have to plan ahead. The regular police with their professional expertise, using the bulk of the manpower of our Police National Servicemen supplemented by Police and Army reservists together with the other residents can be built into a comprehensive network for the maintenance of security in these highrise estates. We are now working out the details as to how this can be achieved. Crime statistics of our HDB estates are being gathered and crime patterns studied. With the aid of the Ministry of Finance computer to study the records of police and reservist personnel supplied by the HDB, Director of Manpower and the Police,

an operational plan for a pilot project is being prepared. Before that we shall decide whether it will take the form of a Block Committee for each highrise block or for several blocks.

The building of Divisional Police Stations in every large HDB new town is thus a first step in the overall plan of enlisting active public participation in the maintenance of law and order in these estates. The architectural design of this new Toa Payoh Police Station has been drawn with this objective in view. The public areas have been designed for easy access and to provide for comfort and convenience to members of the public who come to the station to make reports or enquiries. The forbidding appearance of the old police stations has been banished. This \$1.9 million new station replaces the old Kandang Kerbau Police Station that was built 46 years ago in 1931. It has also all the modern facilities of a Divisional Police Headquarters.

Today's opening of the Toa Payoh Station coincides with Police Day, which is a special day set aside when every police officer re-affirms his/her pledge to serve the public in the best tradition of the Force. I have therefore great pleasure in declaring the Toa Payoh Station officially open on this auspicious day.