TRANSCRIPT OF PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH AT TANJONG PAGAR COMMUNITY CENTRE ON 30TH OCTOBER, 1965.

Mr. Charirman and friends,

I want to just briefly summarise what I have said just now in Hokkien.

First, I am very happy this evening to be able to be with all my friends in the Tanjong Pagar Community Centre and to be with my constituents.

It has been two months since I have had a chance to come to the commuity centre and I am happy to see that things are going on well even though I am pre-occupied with other problems.

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Tonight is the 5th annual "Ping-Pong" tournament. I say "ping-pong" is very good. It demands a quick eye and a quick reaction. But other things are also necessary: gymnastics, weight-lifting, boxing, basketball -- all the things that make for a nation with vitality and with the grit and the mettle to fight for its survival. Because we live in a very predatory region.

This is region where many things happen. One day, Soekarno is President of the Republic of Indonesia: the next day, a Colonel says that he has taken over; a few days later, the Colonel is captured; and many generals are dead.

This is not an easy part of the world in which to live! And this happens amongst our neighbours. President Soekarno says, "This is living dangerously," He knows, because he lives in a country which is like that. So he must know whether it is dangerous living or peaceful living'. He says it is "living dangerously". And, I wonder whether he is the only neighbour that is living dangerously.

We want to live peacefully. But, to live peacefully, other people must know that if they interfere with us, they will find it unpleasant. This is important.

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Whilst we were in Malaysia, training for our Territorial Army, Volunteers, Vigilante Corps was dependent on the Malaysian Government. They were in charge of the Army, the Territorials, the Vigilante Corps and the Police. Now we ourselves are in charge. We have to look after our little part of South-East Asia and breed a generation -- a fighting generation, not a cowardly, nor a weak, feeble pleasure-loving generation. Whether we are clerks, hawkers or workers, our people must also be fighters.

We cannot afford a big army. If we have a big army we will go bankrupt. One regiment of 800 to 1,000 men costs $10 million a year to feed, provide with uniforms, guns, bullets, transport lorries. We have got 2,000 men in 2 regiments and they cost $20 million. That is not the way for us. We must depend on volunteers, territorials -- weekend soldiers. On weekdays, in the day, they go to work, whether they are doing office or outdoor work as workers. But at weekends, they practise how to look after their people and their country. So, at any time when there is trouble, whether riots or infiltrators. You know, some people may think, "Let's have a riot in Singapore. They have only 2,000 soldiers and 5,000 police: they can't control the place. And, if we ask the British to help us control the riots, it would be very bad for us..

So, we must have our own volunteers: our Territorial Army. If there is any riot and work stops and a curfew is imposed, then all the workers, the clerks, even the hawkers -- are trained ... They will go to the bridges and to every important junction and guard their section. And if anybody tries to cause trouble, they will know how to look after Indians or Eurasians, we are all Singaporeans and this is our country. We must train our people to look after this country not to attack anybody.

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We do not want to go to the Rhio Islands and invade other people's countries. That is not good. We just look after ourselves. If anybody comes in, he must answer for it.

You know, two weeks ago, I went to Pasir Panjang to open the new power station. I walked round and discovered, to my discomfort, that most of the people guarding it were not Singaporeans. We have to depend on the Malaysian Government to help us guard. That is no good. We must defend our section. This is very important.

I know that the salary for soldiers is poor compared with that for the police. So everybody wants to join the police, and our police is multi-racial. So we have a multi-racial Territorial Army.

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We must find a new way whereby everybody, regardless of race, language or religions, does his fair share to defend his country. And, one of the best ways is: you do your job, whether as a hawker, a worker, a clerk, a shopkeeper or a manager -- it does not matter -- out, in the evenings you learn how to march: how to guard a power station, how to guard a bridge; how to march up to down the coast and make sure nobody gets in. And, if anybody comes in, how to make sure that he is dealt with.

This is a dangerous part of the world. People around us are living dangerously and they say openly that they are living dangerously. And some of them are living in a hazardous way because they do not know that what they doing is bad for themselves and for their neighbours -- and this is equally dangerous!

So, I say to you: "ping-pong" is good; gymnastics is also good as well as judo, “koon-tow" etc. They are good for Singapore, for you, for me for they will breed a rugged generation to ensure our survival.

And always remember, too, the 9 million people in Malaysia are our own countrymen, our own people. If you fight only for Singapore, it is not clever. That way there is no long term future. We fight for Singapore -- 2 million people -- and Singapore is the yeast that will help the ferment that will raise the level of life and prosperity for millions of other people who are one with us.

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So, from "ping-pong" to other sports, to health, to strength, to vigour, to discipline, to defence and survival and ultimately to triumph.

Thank you.

30th October, 1965.

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