TRANSCRIPT OF SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
WHEN HE REVIEWED THE COMBINED CADET CORPS
ANNUAL INSPECTION AND PRESENTATION PARADE
AT THE POLICE TRAINING SCHOOL ON 26TH JULY,
1967.

Young citizens of Singapore,

It gives me considerable satisfaction this afternoon to review this parade, for it marks the third year of the expansion of cadet work in our schools which started some time in 1964.

In the last two years since we became a republic on our own, we have had time to reassess and to re-evaluate the content, the purpose, the direction of what our education and our training is supposed to do for our young citizens.

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The human being is the most complex and sophisticated of all living creatures and, as such, he requires the longest period of nurturing and training before he is able to meet the problems of life and living in modern human society.

A boy or girl is brought up, taught to speak, to walk, to learn the elementary things at home. And now in a modern community, at four or five, he goes to a kindergarten, learns to play with other boys, learns to put building bricks together, add, subtract. Two years of that, and at six he goes to a primary school. After six years of primary school, he goes on to a secondary school. If he has the mental capacity and the aptitude, he goes right on for six years till he finishes his Higher School Certificate. And if he has what it takes for further education, he goes on either to college or university for anywhere between three to four to six years. And so, with the most important of all our digits, they spend no less than about 24 years of learning and training from home till final graduation. And if they become doctors, there is the one year housemanship or for engineers, the one-year apprenticeship. Then they go out into world.

And the whole purpose of training -- whether you leave school at Primary VI or at Secondary IV or after your HSC -- is to prepare you to be able to meet the kind of problems you will meet in a society like Singapore.

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If we live in a different society and grow rice or rubber or pineapples for a living, then all this complex training would not have been necessary. All you have to know is the simple things: about when you grow your rice, just before the rains come; transplant immediately after the rains and so on; and when you reap,

how you prevent rats from eating up your grain. But we do not live in that kind of a society.

This was a centre of great trading. People lived as a result of great skills developed on how to collect the kind of goods from the surrounding area which other parts of the world want, and to import and redistribute the kind of goods which other people in the region want. That kind of a world, which made possible a great trading centre like Singapore, has already changed and will continue to change. And the world in which you, ten years from now as adult citizens, will live in, will work in and learn to run, will be one in which more and more our livelihoods will depend upon technological and industrial skills to be the kind of community that acts as a kind of workshop for ourselves and for the region. Therefore, the whole purpose of your training is to prepare you to meet these problems.

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But there is one problem which every boy and girl in Singapore faces, and this is a function which everybody must be able to discharge, whether he is to be a scientist or whether he is going to be just a plain simple skilled worker. This is to be able to stand up for yourself as an effective digit in a security arrangement with such allies who have an interest in this region to ensure that what we have

built, what our forefathers have handed to us and on which we are building is not brought to ruin.

Small communities like ours must be either rugged and tough or they must perish. Whatever the specialisation you may do in life, there is one thing we ask and we must ask of every one of our citizens: the capacity for group discipline, group activity, specialised skill and training to perform the minimal functions for our security and our continued peace and prosperity.

And so it is that, earlier this year, we decided on a National Service Bill which means that, over the years, there will be no boy, no girl who enjoys the benefit of being a citizen of Singapore -- and with it the best educational and social facilities anywhere in this part of the world -- will not be able to make a contribution in our own defence.

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I would like to see from schools more and more not just cadets but all-rounders. There is time for specialization later on whether you are going to be a scholar or scientist, an artist or a musician. But everyone of you must be a rugged and a dogged citizen of Singapore, able to shoulder his little bit in his own national interest.

Before I close, may I just summarise what I have said in Malay and in Chinese, an exercise which I hope over the years will become less and less necessary as we get more and more bi-lingual and tri-lingual students from our schools.

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