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PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR PHUA BAH LEE, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (DEFENCE), AT THE 11TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SAF RESERVISTS' ASSOCIATION (SAFRA) AT SAFRA BUKIT MERAH CLUBHOUSE AUDITORIUM ON SUNDAY, 26 AUGUST 1984 AT 4 PM

I am pleased to report that SAFRA has had a good year of activities, the highlights of which were the SAF-SAFRA Friendship Games, the Meet-the-Reservists Sessions and the Total Defence Forum focusing on the relationship between employers and reservists. SAFRA's viability depends on the dedication of our members towards the multiple roles it serves as well as SAFRA's ability to meet the increasing needs and higher expectations of our members. Towards this end, SAFRA has inaugurated a War Games Club and a reading room-cum-library stocked with the latest collection of military periodicals and references for the military enthusiast.

During the year, we conducted a comprehensive survey to ascertain members preferences for future activities and facilities. The survey results would enable SAFRA to better tailor its activities to suit the needs of members and their families. The results of the survey were encouraging and revealed a greater level of reservists interest in SAFRA-organised activities. While the majority of reservists viewed SAFRA as an extension of MINDEF, a recreation/sports club and a rendezvous for fellow reservists, it was significant that seventy-five per cent of those who responded also saw SAFRA as an information source on SAF developments, a means of promoting a sense of common identity with the SAF and community spirit among reservists.

Another aspect of the survey focused on the lifestyles of SAFRA members. We learnt that 30 per cent of reservists worked 11 hours or more a day during weekdays while 50 per cent spent at least one hour or more studying. For their annual IPPT preparations, the survey found the majority of reservists jogged and exercised at home to stay fit. Nevertheless, we are concerned to learn from the survey that one out of four reservists did not prepare for the IPPT due to physical disability or sheer apathy. This is an area which we will need to address. On the other hand, it is heartening to note that the survey showed that one in four reservists preferred to pursue vigorous leisure activity like swimming as opposed to sedentary pursuits like watching TV and video tapes or film shows. This trend augurs well for the future as the physical condition of our reservists relates directly to their performance in military training and the annual IPPT. It is therefore opportune for SAFRA to establish a physical education committee to coordinate all aspects of physical training including overseeing of reservists IPPT.

While the survey focused mainly on the socio-recreational facet of the association's pursuits, we must not overlook our role as defenders of the nation. Our activities should further promote stronger bonds of comradeship and cohesive team spirit among our members. This in turn would generate a greater readiness and dedication to their roles in the SAF as reservists.

At MINDEF we have constantly applied the skills of reservists through infusing high calibre talent into the senior echelons of the SAF. MINDEF has always been mindful of the necessity of providing reservists with opportunities for assuming greater command and staff responsibilities that call for the exercise of leadership and managerial expertise. Hitherto reservist officers have assumed field

appointments like Battalion Commanders, Brigade Commanders and principal staff officers of manoeuvre and support units. Soon selected senior reservist officers of Lieutenant-Colonel rank and above will be assigned to hold key appointments at MINDEF and Service HQ levels in the General Staff, Air Staff, Naval Staff and Specialist Arms Headquarters. These appointments will challenge our senior reservist officers, test their ability and harness their potential to the fullest, in the continuing process of moulding talent and injecting greater professionalism in the major pillar of our Armed Forces. Details are being finalised and will be announced shortly.
