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Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY MR WONG KAN SENG, MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS,
AT THE LAUNCH OF POLICE COAST GUARD'S NEW PATROL AND
INTERCEPTOR BOATS ON SATURDAY 29 JANUARY 2000, 10.05 AM,
AT POLICE COAST GUARD HEADQUARTERS, 5 STADIUM LANE.**

Commissioner of Police

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning.

Singapore, the Port

The port has historically been a very vital part of Singapore and of our economy. Singapore is a natural entrepot because of our strategic location in sea trade routes. It is this that attracted the traders and our forefathers here. Today,

the port remains important to us.

Safeguarding Singapore Waters

2 The Home Team's responsibility in making Singapore a safe and secure best home extends to Singapore waters. The Police Coast Guard plays the crucial role of safeguarding the integrity of our territorial waters. Over the years, our waters have become busier, in tandem with Singapore's growth as a maritime hub.

3 A heavily used sea route offers tempting targets to criminals. The Police Coast Guard must remain an effective deterrent.

PCG Ready to Face Challenges

4 Police Coast Guard presence and patrols have kept our waters safe from crime. The PCG has also thwarted many illegal immigration attempts. Last year, PCG foiled 52 attempts and arrested close to 240 illegal immigrants, a drop of more than 30 per cent compared to 75 foiled attempts in 1998. Attempts to enter Singapore waters illegally fell in the second part of last year after PCG officers stepped up patrols and deployment.

Enhanced Capability

5 The 20 new high-speed patrol boats which PCG launches today are equipped with the latest surveillance and digital communications equipment. They have a top speed of 40 knots, much higher than the old crafts' maximum speed of 29 knots.

6 In addition, PCG is launching another six highly manoeuvrable interceptor

speedboats, with a 50-knot top speed, bringing the total interceptor boats to 11.

7 With these new boats, the entire PCG fleet will be 82 crafts.

8 Illegal immigrants and traffickers who try to sneak in by sea will be out-matched by this new fleet of high-performance boats. These boats complement the range of equipment already available to PCG - among them, the enhanced radar and opto-electronic surveillance systems which enable PCG to detect sea intrusions, especially at night.

Continued Upgrading and Upholding of Security

9 In order to stay on top of criminal and illegal activities, the upgrading process must continue. Only then can the Police Coast Guard continue to protect our territorial waters.

10 I wish the Police Coast Guard continued success in doing their part in keeping Singapore safe and secure.

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