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SPEECH BY SINGAPORE SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME
AFFAIRS AND LAW,
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR HO PENG KEE

Good Afternoon, Chairman, Heads of Delegation, Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

2 In a Conference like this, we can all learn from each other how to more effectively tackle problems common to us. In this spirit, I have listened to other speeches over these two days, and would like to share with you Singapore's efforts in three key areas: first, Singapore's strategies against the scourge of terrorism; second, our use of technology against criminal activity, and third, Singapore's approach to tackling youth crime. The desired actions here are first, marshalling strong political will and displaying serious intent; second, leveraging fully on technology and finally, galvanising the community. Whilst international co-operation is increasingly important in a globalised world, a critical first step is that we do our best to address these problems at home.

SINGAPORE'S EFFORTS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

3 On terrorism, Singapore recognises that the terrorist threat is a clear and present one. We have adopted a multi-prong approach to tackle this scourge.

International Cooperation

4 First, intelligence sharing should be enhanced. Singapore has readily shared relevant intelligence with foreign security agencies. This has led to the arrest of several Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) members in the region spread over several countries. Singapore participates actively in many international and regional security fora, sharing our experiences in counter-terrorism and hosting training courses for regional countries. We are also a party to a number of international conventions against terrorism.

Addressing Ideological and Social Factors

5 We also tackle terrorism on the ideological and social fronts. Hence, Ministers have met up with our Muslim and non-Muslim community leaders to discuss the terrorism issue openly and rationally. Our local Muslim community

have also developed and implemented self regulatory measures to prevent radical and extremist groups from subverting and misleading Singapore Muslims. This is because we believe that the Muslim community itself is in the best position to ensure that its own members are ideologically inoculated against wrong and dangerous religious teachings. As for those who have been detained, religious leaders from the community have voluntarily counseled them to guide them back to the correct interpretation of Islam and the Quran. The majority of the detainees have responded positively to the religious counselling.

Enhancing Protective and Preventive Measures

6 And finally, on the terrorism front, we have put in place a number of protective and preventive measures to enhance our homefront security. For instance, in the area of maritime and port security, since 1 July 2004, we have complied fully with security measures adopted by the International Maritime Organisation (or IMO). We have also tightened security screening of incoming cargo and travellers, deploying state of the art radiographic scanners in doing so.

7 We are now moving towards greater use of biometrics for immigration clearance. A new passport to be introduced in October this year will have enhanced security features, incorporating biometric identification technology. We recently completed trials to employ iris recognition technology to clear motorcyclists at our checkpoints. A new-generation integrated traveller screening system which is capable of high-speed, accurate travel document scanning and equipped with counter-forgery detection capabilities, has also been deployed at our checkpoints.

8 If all countries make the effort to share relevant intelligence on terrorist activities, address religious extremism in their midst, safeguard their borders and take protective measures on the land, sea and air fronts, collectively, we will restrict the space for terrorist movement globally.

LEVERAGING ON THE USE OF' TECHNOLOGY AGAINST CRIME

9 In Singapore, we have found that two important focus in fighting terrorism and crime are the nurturing of a creative, skilled manpower and good use of technology.

Police Cameras - CCTVs

10 On the technology front, other than the devices I have mentioned earlier to safeguard our borders, since Sep 11, we have increasingly leveraged on the capabilities of closed circuit televisions (CCTVs) as a tool to fight crime and

terrorism and indeed, even vice. We have discovered that the use of CCTVs has a strong psychological deterrent effect, and provides Police with valuable real time information to apprehend offenders without undue delay. CCTV recordings have also proven to be a valuable aid and resource in providing investigative leads. We now deploy police surveillance cameras in areas with a high incidence of crime, vice and public order disturbance as well as in safeguarding key installations.

Forensics and Technology

11 In the area of forensics, Singapore launched a DNA database in July 2004, comprising both offenders' DNA profiles as well as DNA profiles recovered from crime scenes. This is particularly useful in surfacing repeat offenders as it helps establish links between previous DNA profiles recovered.

12 The detection of latent fingerprints by the police has also been greatly enhanced by the use of the Phase-Resolved Optical Technique. Latent fingerprints which could not possibly be detected at the crime scene using traditional methods can now be detected.

13 To stimulate greater interest amongst countries in the Asian region in employing technology to fight crime and terrorism, Singapore recently hosted a first-ever Global Security Conference in Asia.

14 Aside from the use of advanced technology to help fight crime, we also engage the community to help keep Singapore safe and secure. Our efforts to reduce youth crime is an example of how government agencies and the community work together.

EFFORTS TO TACKLE YOUTH CRIME IN SINGAPORE

15 We take an inter-Ministry approach, drawing in expertise and resources of Non-Governmental Organisations, youth organisations, parent support group and community groups in tackling juvenile delinquency and youth crimes in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

16 To steer these wide-ranging efforts, we have in place a Inter-Ministry Committee on Youth Crime (IMYC) which plays an instrumental role in monitoring the implementation of more than 25 specific measures and programmes, especially in the key areas of Prevention, Public Education and Rehabilitation.

17 This multi-agency approach had led to a decline in youth crime over the years.

IMYC Programmes

18 IMYC programmes are wide-ranging. To specifically address the two offences with the highest incidence amongst youths ie shoptheft and fighting in public, Police produced and delivered an information package with interactive features and conducted skits and quizzes at more than 300 schools and tertiary institutions. These roadshows aim to impress upon students the adverse effects of committing crime and to inform them of the simple steps they can take to avoid the lure of crime. On its part, the Prisons Department conducts a Prisons Visit Programme for at-risk youths to give them a first-hand account of what is in store should they land up in prison. In our schools, we have introduced an Honorary Volunteer Special Constabulary scheme comprising assigned teachers who act as effective bridge between the school and the neighbourhood police. For youths who go wayward, many are helped and guided to the straight and narrow path through Guidance And Community Service programmes that incorporate features of Service Learning and Counselling.

19 In addition to programmes, IMYC obtains regular feedback from the ground and provides platforms such as seminars and conferences for key stakeholders and the community to share knowledge, best practices and to network. The IMYC also supports youth organisations and voluntary welfare organisations in their work with juveniles by providing resources such as funding for at-risk youth programmes, producing manuals and guides and conducting research studies on problems associated with juvenile delinquency. The work of the IMYC has been compiled in this publication "Fighting Youth Crime: A Comparative Study of Two Dragons", now into its second edition.

20 More information on the work of IMYC can be found at the IMYC website: www.imvc.org.sg.

21 For us Ministers with responsibility in tackling juvenile delinquency and youth crime, it must be an on-going effort. There can be no let up. Different generations of youths face different types of problems. Solutions which work at one time may not work at another. Thus, the challenge is to remain alert and relevant to meet the changing needs of our youth.

CONCLUSION

22 In Singapore, we have learnt that the fight against crime and terrorism can only be waged successfully if there is strong political will backed by competent and committed professionals in the various security forces, supported by an

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appreciative local community, including Non-Governmental Organisations, and executed in co-operation with the international community at large.

23 I wish you a fruitful and successful congress meeting on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice here in Bangkok. Thank you.