



SPEECH

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Speech by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, Dr Tony Tan, at the National Day Parade 2002 Appreciation Dinner

30 Aug 2002

Three weeks ago, Singapore celebrated 37 years of Independence with a memorable and meaningful National Day Parade. NDP 2002 served to rally and uplift the spirits of Singaporeans in the face of difficult economic times and heightened security awareness. Resulting from your meticulous planning, whole-hearted support and participation, Singaporeans have emerged from the experience with a renewed sense of national pride and belonging. This refreshing, creative and enjoyable event was very well received by Singaporeans. The Parade has strengthened our faith and resolve to face together, as one nation, the uncertain environment which confront us today.

Our shared hopes and aspirations for the future are encapsulated in the five shared values and the Singapore 21 Vision. Our goal is to be a global city and the best home for Singaporeans. However, many challenges lie ahead. Integrated into the global system, Singapore cannot be insulated from the fallout of international developments, both political and economic. The slowdown in the global economy has severely affected our economy. The aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attack could potentially strain our social cohesion. At a time when these challenges confront us, our response must be united, coherent and integrated.

Singaporeans need not feel helpless and unsettled by the challenges. We have a strong foundation on which we can build to help us overcome the current difficulties. As a nation, we have demonstrated the resolve and cohesion to make great strides in spite of overwhelming odds. The aptly chosen theme of "A Caring Nation" for National Day Parade 2002 served as a rallying call for Singaporeans to reach out to one other as we forge our collective future together.

In Singapore, a community of many races and religions has flourished in harmony for many years. The racial and religious harmony we have in Singapore is a very precious asset that each and every Singaporean must help to preserve. Only when we have unity of purpose and a sense of common destiny, can we have peace, prosperity and progress for all Singaporeans.

Today, Singapore stands at a critical juncture as we equip ourselves for the challenges of a globalized economy. As we reach out to the world, let us not forget that each of us is a part of the larger whole that is Singapore. If we care for one another and work together hand in hand, the challenges ahead will not seem too daunting. We will take each challenge in our stride and strive to achieve our common vision together.

I would like to express my appreciation to the many corporate and individual sponsors who, despite the current economic climate, have come forward with their generous contribution. NDP 2002 would not have been possible nor complete without the support and commitment of active corporate citizens like yourselves. Your involvement is a clear indication of your commitment to the growth and progress of our nation. I wish you every success in the years ahead and look forward to your continued support.

In closing, let me express my appreciation to all of you here this evening. Each and everyone of you, from the organisers to the marching contingents, participants, choreographers, trainers, artistes and in particular, those who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes, has shown great dedication and sacrifice to make NDP 2002 a meaningful experience for all Singaporeans. You have all done Singapore proud. On behalf of the Government of Singapore, I thank you for your significant contribution to the success of NDP 2002.

I wish you a pleasant evening, and all the best for the future. Together, "we will get there".

Thank you very much.

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