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**WELCOME ADDRESS BY DR TEO HO PIN MAYOR OF
NORTH WEST DISTRICT AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE TOTAL
DEFENCE NORTH WEST CDC PHOTO EXHIBITION “TOTAL DEFENCE IN
ACTION – WINNING IMAGES 2005” ON SUNDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2005 AT
THE CHONG PANG COMMUNITY CLUB**

Director Nexus COL Tan Kok Heng

Friends and residents of North West District

A very good morning to all of you. I am delighted to see so many familiar and happy faces in the crowd. I hope you enjoyed the walk in the company of family, friends and neighbours, as much as I did.

Some of you may be wondering why this morning's walk is called the “Total Defence Walk”. Total Defence is not new. The younger ones here know that we have Total Defence Day on 15 Feb. But ask our grandparents and they remember it as the day Singapore was surrendered to the Japanese in World War II. That was the day we lost our freedom as a country because we could not defend it. Today, we are a young nation with 40 years of independence, but we must not forget how we got here. Not long ago, I remember asking my son/daughter if he/she has heard of Total Defence, and his/her reply was “Yes! The Army and the Firemen! Military and Civil Defence, that is Total Defence.” I

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brought my children to the National Day Carnival at Marina last month. My 10-years old son was so inspired by the displays put up by the SAF, the Civil Defence Force and the Police at the Total Defence Showcase. In fact, he said he wanted to do his part to help keep Singapore safe, and fly a fighter plane, or steer a Navy ship, or even drive a fire engine when he grows up. While I am proud of his ambitions, I do wonder how many of us think of Total Defence as just that. That we need to be in uniforms, drive Military vehicles, and take up weapons to fight enemies to do our part for Total Defence.

Actually, Total Defence is not just about Military, or even Civil Defence. It is more than that! Total Defence is about what every Singaporean can and should do to help keep our country safe and secure, especially at a time when we read and hear about terrorist attacks and civil wars in other parts of the world. And it is not just for ourselves, but also for our children and our future generations. It goes beyond just learning first aid, reporting suspicious objects that we find in our neighbourhood, or sending our sons for National Service. Total Defence is also about the simple things that we do everyday, and many of us are already contributing to Total Defence without knowing it.

This morning, we played our part in Total Defence. We had an enjoyable time together walking and catching up with family, friends and neighbours. We have friends and neighbours of all races and religions coming together, young and old all spending time keeping fit - these help to strengthen and build strong

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bonds across all races, religions and age groups. Maintaining religious and racial harmony is especially important for a multi-racial country like Singapore. In times of war or crisis, we need to stay united as one people and support our country.

Nexus, the Central National Education Office, coordinates the annual Total Defence campaign. I had the chance to meet up with them a couple of months back to learn more about what they do. I am excited that they are bringing Total Defence to the community heartlands. The North West district has the privilege of hosting the first Total Defence photo exhibition “Total Defence in Action – Winning Images 2005” in the CDCs. I understand that this exhibition will travel to the remaining four CDCs in the following weekends.

Director Nexus, COL Tan Kok Heng, was just sharing with me earlier that the challenge for him and his team is to get more Singaporeans to participate in Total Defence activities. I hope the photo exhibition, which shows how average Singaporeans like you and I can play our part in Total Defence, will be able to inspire and encourage us to do more. You see some young students in the photos taking part in drills and exercises and learning life-saving skills. I’m sure we can do even better as adults to be more engaged – if we do not know enough, we can take up civil defence volunteer courses; or be more involved in the community as a family to strengthen your social and psychological bonds. So as we take our time to view the exhibits later, let us remember one key message, and that is, “There is a part for everyone in Total Defence.”

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Thank you and enjoy the rest of your day.
