



SPEECH

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Speech by Chief of Air Force, Major-General Lim Kim Choon, at the Inauguration of the 150 Squadron Building in Cazaux Air Base, France

24 Jul 2002

Good afternoon Second Minister of Defence, Rear Admiral Teo Chee Hean, Senator Xanier Pintat, Members of Parliament, Mayors, General Jean-Pierre Job, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I am very pleased to be here today in Cazaux Air Base. Each visit has been a memorable one, allowing me to strengthen old ties and to establish new ones with my French colleagues. In particular, I can feel the increasing warmth in the relations between the French Air Force and the RSAF each time I return to Cazaux. I am delighted to note that personnel from our two air forces have become very comfortable interacting and dealing with each other. This is a strong testimony of the excellent relations between the FAF and the RSAF.

The FAF and the RSAF have made significant achievements in bilateral co-operation since 1997, when relations between the two air forces started to develop in earnest. The first is the establishment of the RSAF Advanced Jet Training in Cazaux Air Base. The second is the formation of the Air Working Group, which continues to meet regularly to chart the roadmap of interaction and co-operation between our two air forces. Another is the conduct of Exercise Eastern Arc, under which the FAF deployed its aircraft to Singapore in 1998 and 2000 for air combat training with the RSAF. Both air forces recently agreed that the RSAF would deploy its F16 aircraft to France next year for a similar exercise. The most recent initiative is the officers' exchange programme. A team of young officers from the FAF visited Singapore in December last year, while a team from the RSAF visited France in April this year. Helping to enhance the teams' understanding of each air force as well as each country, the exchange programme will lay the foundation for even warmer relations between our two air forces in the future. It is heartening to note that our bilateral co-operation continues to grow and deepen.

Today, we are here to celebrate the successful completion of yet another project - the completion of the 150 Squadron building. In developing this new facility, both the Defence Science & Technology Agency and the RSAF worked closely with the FAF. It is clear from the fine product which we all see before us that both sides have successfully overcome the challenges and added another achievement to our bilateral co-operation. On behalf of DSTA and the RSAF, I would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the French Air Force for spearheading the project and for ensuring its smooth completion.

I would also like to use this opportunity to reiterate the importance of Cazaux Air Force Base to the RSAF. The vast airspace and the excellent weather here in Cazaux have been most useful to the RSAF for training fledgling pilots, who require an uninterrupted training programme to build their confidence and hone their flying skills. Over the last five years, 150 Squadron has produced 49 fighter pilots and clocked close to 9000 flying hours in Cazaux. This is no small achievement. The RSAF could not have done it without the support given by the Base, the French Air Force, the French Ministry of Defence, as well as the local community. Beyond mere numbers, there are also other benefits. Putting our young pilot trainees in regular contact with the experienced and well-trained French operators will provide them with a solid foundation for the rest of their flying careers.

Today's inauguration of the 150 Squadron building therefore marks a special milestone in co-operation between the FAF and the RSAF. In addition to providing a second home for our young pilots, it sets in concrete the excellent relations between our two air forces. Looking ahead, there will be many more generations of RSAF pilots, who will grow up from this nesting ground and graduate as the future fighter pilots of the RSAF. I am confident that the strong ties and friendship that they cultivate with their French counterparts while training in Cazaux will strengthen the bonds between the two air forces, and open up greater opportunities for co-operation and bring about more mutual benefits to both air forces in the years ahead.

In conclusion, I would personally like to thank and congratulate everyone who has contributed to the successful completion of the new 150 Squadron building. From my brief conversation with my personnel based here, I am assured that all of them and their families are enjoying their stay here. I would therefore like to thank the Base Commander and the local community for the excellent support and great hospitality extended to the RSAF personnel based here in Cazaux. Lastly, I would like to send my best wishes to the aircrew of ETO and 150 Squadron, and please keep up the good work in making this partnership an enriching one.

Thank you.

News Release:

- RADM (NS) Teo Inaugurates RSAF's Advanced Jet Training Facilities at Cazaux (Document No: MINDEF_20020724001.pdf)

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