



SPEECH

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Speech by LG Ng Yat Chung, outgoing Chief of Defence Force, at the Change of Command Parade

23 Mar 2007

Minister for Defence, 2nd Minister, Permanent Secretaries, distinguished guests, members of the SAF, ladies and gentlemen.

A very good afternoon to all of you.

It has been a great honour for me to be Chief of Defence Force for the past 4 years. I took over the appointment just as the war on Iraq and the SARs outbreak began. Since then, the Singapore Armed Forces has been kept busy. The SAF has maintained a high operational tempo and played our part as a responsible member of the international security community with several overseas humanitarian relief and peace support operations, from Indonesia, Thailand, the US to Iraq, and soon to Afghanistan. Principal among these operations was Operation Flying Eagle, which was our relief effort for the Boxing Day Tsunami Disaster in 2004. It was the largest and most complex mission the SAF had undertaken to date. We responded in a way any good neighbour would have done - swiftly, decisively with compassion and sensitivity. More than 1,500 servicemen and women were deployed abroad to provide emergency relief, supported by many more back here in Singapore. Our SAF men and women have also actively contributed to various regional security operations. Examples include our participation along with Indonesia and Malaysia in the Malacca Strait Patrols (MSP) since July 2004, comprising of the Malacca Strait Sea Patrols (MSSP) and the "Eyes in the Sky" (EiS) maritime air patrols. Not only were we busy with operations, we continued with our intense program of bilateral and multi-lateral exercises. Last year, for example, we conducted more than 70 significant bilateral and multi-lateral exercises. This has helped us maintain our operational edge and also maintain a strong network of friends with whom we learn to operate alongside, should the need arise. Closer to home, the SAF has worked closely with our Home Team agencies and other government agencies to enhance Homeland Security. We maintained vigilance round the clock in the air, at sea and on land. Our people, together with the homefront agencies, put in place appropriate security measures against many forms of foreseeable contingencies that can threaten Singapore.

Amidst the high operational and training tempo, efforts to enhance the SAF's capability continue so that the SAF remains relevant against tomorrow's security threats. We started with the journey to transform the SAF into the Third Generation SAF to ensure we stay

relevant to the security challenges of the future. It involves changing the way we think about operations, the way we equip and organise ourselves.

We acquired new technologies, in the areas of the Integrated Knowledge Based Command and Control System (IKC2), precision strike and unmanned systems, as well as major fighting platforms like F15SG, the Naval Helicopters and Leopard II MBTs. We have complemented them with new operational concepts to derive transformational outcomes in warfighting. We would transform the way we fight such that the SAF's capability would no longer be dependent purely on numbers and supremacy of individual platforms, but based on a total systems and network-centric approach. As part of this process of transformation, we were able to reduce the duration of full-time National Service to 2 years, and reduce the in-camp training required of NSmen from 13 to 10 years. We became more joint and more integrated in the conduct of our planning and operations. There is now more comprehensive integration of capabilities, planning and strategy across the Army, Navy and Airforce. We restructured ourselves to be a force that is more versatile across a wide spectrum of operations, able to deal with threats from across the entire spectrum of conflict, from counter-terrorism, to low-intensity conflict, to full-scale war. We have also become more readily to deploy tailored slices of SAF to respond, at short notice, to various peacetime contingencies. With these changes, the SAF has taken a big step to become a full spectrum force able to meet the operational demands from peace to war in a more flexible and calibrated manner. It has moved closer to becoming a networked and knowledge-based force, much better integration between the Army, Navy and Airforce in its planning and operational capabilities. In all these endeavours, our people, Regulars, NSF's and NSmen, have done well and it is fitting that I commend all our commanders, staff, soldiers, sailors and airmen for all their contributions over these four years. I have been heartened by the sense of professional pride, dedication and commitment that each and every one of you has displayed in the conduct of their duties. I am proud to be associated with you. In conclusion, I want to thank the Government for granting me this privilege to serve as Chief of Defence Force. I thank Minister for Defence for his guidance and MINDEF HQ for their support over the last 4 years. I am deeply appreciative of the confidence and trust they have had in me and the SAF.

To my Service Chiefs and Joint Staff, I appreciate your efforts in moving the SAF a step closer to becoming an integrated SAF, and a step closer towards the goal of the Third Generation Armed Forces.

I want to thank DSTA, DSO and our partners in defence industries. You have been instrumental in providing creative and cost effective solutions towards keeping the edge of the SAF sharp. To all my foreign counterparts represented by the respective Defence Attaches here, your contributions towards bilateral relations between the SAF and your armed forces has been both valuable and much appreciated.

And to every member of the SAF, the regulars, DXOs, NSmen and NSF's, it has been my honour to have led you and worked with you all these four years. I am pleased to hand over this appointment to Major-General Desmond Kuek. He is no stranger to all of you and his efforts as Chief of Army in transforming the Army is one of many successful milestones in a distinguished career. His wide experience will serve the SAF. Under his leadership, I am assured that the SAF is in good hands and that our people have the wherewithal to succeed and meet the challenges of the future.

To Commander 3rd Division and the parade organising committee, to the Parade Commander

and everyone on parade today, my utmost appreciation for your tremendous effort. I wish each and every one of you the very best in your journey ahead. Thank you and farewell.

News Release:

- New Chief for the SAF (MINDEF_20070323001_1.pdf)

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