



SPEECH

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Speech by outgoing Chief of Defence Force Lieutenant-General Desmond Kuek Bak Chye at the Chief of Defence Force Change of Command Parade

01 Apr 2010

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence,
Minister for Education and 2nd Minister for Defence,
Distinguished Guests,
Fellow Commanders,
Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen and women of the Singapore Armed Forces.

I would like to thank all of you for being present today, and for those on parade for your outstanding turnout and bearing on this occasion of the Change of Command between myself and MG Neo Kian Hong.

MG Neo has held many distinguished appointments - in operations, training, plans and manpower. With his strong background in operations and training, his professionalism and commitment to nurturing the continued transformation of the SAF into the next spiral, and his genuine care for the well-being and development of people, I am confident that the SAF will reach new heights under his leadership. I ask that you give him the same excellent support that you have given me these past years.

It was just 3 years ago that we set out on a bold vision to build ONE SAF - an SAF that would be more integrated, flexible, networked, cohesive and effective. That vision was guided by three key priority action areas.

The first was to operationalise the 3rd Generation SAF by ensuring high readiness in a full spectrum of mission requirements from peace to war. Today, our people are deployed overseas in current operations in Timor Leste, the Gulf of Aden and Afghanistan; and on high readiness here at home safeguarding our air, sea, land and our national interests. We also established an integrated concept to capability framework to guide the development of future systems, and enhanced our effectiveness and efficiency by reorganising into integrated hubs

and networks that bring together existing functions, domains and services to achieve our assigned tasks. Our people and our structures are now better positioned and ready for the challenges facing us today and into the future.

The second key effort was to nurture first class people in a world class organisation by strengthening professionalism in the armed forces through military training and education and continual learning, systematising leadership development and embedding core values in our work culture and ethos. Today, the new HR constructs take effect, with enhancements made to the Officer and Warrant Officer Schemes, and the creation of a new Military Domain Experts Scheme. With these initiatives, our Warrant Officers, Military Experts and Officers stand shoulder to shoulder to lead in service, power greater excellence and sharpen the professional edge of the SAF.

And thirdly, we sought to engage all our people towards stronger commitment and excellence by addressing the intellectual, emotional and functional needs: the hands, equipping our people with the skills and knowledge so that they can do; the head, so that our people understand why and what they must do; and the heart, so that our people believe and will do.

For all these, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to DPM and members of MINDEF HQ for their invaluable guidance and support; to my Service Chiefs, Directors, commanders and staff in the Joint Services Committee and in the Army, Navy and Air Force for leading the SAF alongside with me; to the MINDEF and DSTA staff as well as our partners in DSO and the industry for your strong collaboration; and to all our soldiers, sailors and airmen - regular and national servicemen, for your loyalty and commitment in the defence of our country. On a personal note, I wish to thank my wife and children for their love and understanding, and for letting me put the SAF "first and foremost" all these years.

It has been my honour and privilege to have led you as CDF up to this stage of our transformation journey. It gives me great pride and satisfaction to see how, together, we have put all these key building blocks in place. I have been inspired and encouraged by so many outstanding and dedicated leaders everywhere in the SAF - always daring to dream and raring to do, always striving For A Higher Purpose, and always committed to L.I.V.E.ing their best. I am also humbled to find in the SAF so many ordinary people of all ranks from all walks who share the most extraordinary attitude that nothing gets in their way, Nothing Comes Close, and nothing is impossible.

I wish everyone in the SAF the very best in the years ahead.

Related Resources:

- New Chief of Defence Force for the SAF (MINDEF_20100401001.pdf)
- Speech by Chief of Defence Force Major-General Neo Kian Hong at the Chief of Defence Force Change of Command Parade (MINDEF_20100401002_1.pdf)