



SPEECH

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Speech by Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Defence and National Development, Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman at the 08/11 Specialist Cadet Course Graduation Parade

23 Sep 2011

Minister of State for Defence Mr Lawrence Wong,
Graduates of the 08/11 Specialist Cadet Course,
Parents,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to join you this evening for the Graduation Parade. To the graduates on parade, let me congratulate all of you on successfully completing the Specialist Cadet Course. It was a tough and rigorous course, which tested your physical and mental abilities and you are here today because you have passed that test. All of you have shown the ability, drive and determination to push the limits and excel. At the same time, I also want to recognise all the people who helped you to reach this milestone - your parents, brothers, sisters and loved ones who have stood behind you every step of the way of your training.

Today's parade marks not just the end of the course but also signifies the beginning of a new journey. As leaders, you are entrusted with the duty of leading men and women under your charge into battle when called upon, to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Singapore, your families, your friends and your future.

Singapore has continued to be a premier place that Singaporeans and many envying foreigners aspire to build their homes. As a whole, our country has come through the 2008 financial ordeal relatively better than others. Our GDP grew 4.9% in the first half of 2011 and despite some risks on the horizon; we project a steady growth of 5-6% for 2011. We are able to achieve this because we have got the fundamentals right - political stability, a clean system, a competitive economy, an educated workforce, a cohesive society, and a strong SAF that has underpinned the peace and security of our country.

Over the years, as military tactics and technologies change, so have the roles of the non-commissioned officers. But they continue to represent and demand the highest military virtues of dedication, discipline and sense of responsibility. Our specialists and warrant officers form the backbone of the SAF. The capabilities of the SAF today are far more advanced and sophisticated than in the past. We have built up a potent third-generation fighting force, with new equipment and systems, as well as new operating concepts, doctrines and tactics. As a responsible member of the international community, the SAF has also participated in many operations, whether in counter-piracy, peace-keeping, or humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

As a newly graduated Specialist, you will be an integral part of this 3rd Generation SAF and the SAF will excel if every soldier and commander excel in what they do. As Specialists, you have to work closely with the Officers to forge a strong and cohesive unit. You have to maintain and enforce discipline in the unit.

You have to manage complex systems and equipment. Most of all, you have to earn the confidence and trust of your men. This means being well-equipped in the fundamentals of your job, and technically and tactically proficient at what you do. Then you can set high standards of rigorous and realistic training for your men, while upholding safety and professionalism at all times. More than words themselves, your actions will determine the degree of trust the soldiers have in you.

As commanders and leaders, you should also make every effort to communicate and spend time with your men. Be their guide, friend and mentor but do not take their respect and loyalty for granted. You are the critical link between the soldiers and the SAF Leadership. Engage your men regularly, and explain to them the rationale of what they are doing, so that they have the mental agility, battlefield awareness, and combat skills to operate effectively as adaptive, thinking soldiers. In an increasingly complex battlefield, every soldier must be constantly aware of his environment, and must know how to translate that knowledge into useable intelligence that will assist leaders up the chain of command and help us to prevail in battle.

Today's Graduation Parade is a significant milestone in your journey in National Service and the SAF. Whatever your next assignment or mission, always cherish and remember this moment, as you stand proud and ready on this parade square, also known as the Leaders Square. The rank that you are about to wear is an affirmation of the nation's trust and confidence in you. I am confident that the Specialist Cadet Course has equipped you with a strong foundation of leadership and combat skill.

Perform your duties to the best of your abilities and live up to the Specialists' creed of excellence, leadership by example and dedication to Singapore.

I am proud of what you have accomplished so far, and welcome all of you as Specialists of

the SAF. I wish you all the best as you serve our country, and keep it safe for all of us.

With PRIDE WE LEAD

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