



# SPEECH

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## **Speech by Senior Minister of State for Defence Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman, at the 26/2015 Specialist Cadet Graduation Parade**

03 Mar 2016

Graduands of the 26/2015 Specialist Cadet Course,

Parents, Ladies and Gentlemen, a very good evening.

To the graduands on parade, congratulations on successfully completing the Specialist Cadet Course. You are here today because you have persevered through 22 weeks of rigorous training, demonstrating great determination and fighting spirit. Your graduation marks the end of a key phase of your training, and I am confident that the Specialist Cadet Course has equipped you with a strong foundation of leadership and combat skills. Your tenacity reflects the can-do spirit, which is the cornerstone of the SAF. Your appointment as Specialists of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) is an affirmation of the nation's trust and confidence in you. Henceforth, you will carry the mantle of leadership, to lead men and women into battle, when called upon to protect your family, your loved ones, and your homeland.

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SG50 was a defining year for Singapore - we celebrated our achievements of the past 50 years, and more importantly, we reaffirmed our commitment to build an even better Singapore for the next 50 years. Even as Singapore continues to maintain our peace and security, incidents around the world are stark reminders that our security environment today is both complex and volatile. Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 demonstrated how a country without a strong defence to protect itself, can easily lose its sovereignty despite enjoying years of peace and stability. Closer to home, in the South China Sea, tensions arising from territorial disputes continue to grow. The threat of terrorism has also spread beyond the Middle East to our own backyard. Just earlier this year, an attack in Jakarta left eight people dead and 24 injured. Militant groups in the Philippines and Indonesia have also pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). On our own soil, 27 radicalised Bangladeshis were arrested and repatriated late last year. Indeed, no country is safe from terrorism. Some have said that it is a matter of when, and not if, a terror attack will take place in Singapore. If it does, we must as a people, close ranks and quickly move on and not allow it to defeat us. This means that we will all need to remain vigilant and resilient in the face of any adversity. In the last 50 years, we have fostered high levels of

trust and cohesion between the different races and communities in Singapore. This must never be compromised!

We must continue to find ways to strengthen trust and cohesion further. The battle is for the hearts and minds of our citizens. To protect the sovereignty of Singapore, the SAF has been diligently enhancing its capabilities over the years, leveraging new technologies, weaponry and platforms. Today, the SAF is a modern and networked force, and stands ready and capable of conducting a wide spectrum of operations. It means the SAF needs men and women of great calibre and character like yourselves to execute these operations. These capabilities have enabled the SAF to make a real difference during peace time as it expanded its role to deal with a spectrum of operations other than war. Together with other ministries and homefront agencies, the SAF is actively involved in homeland security operations. An example would be the Maritime Security Task Force which partners other maritime agencies like the Police Coast Guard to enhance Singapore's maritime security. Another example is the Island Defence Task Force, which together with Homefront agencies, conducts peacetime security operations, such as the protection of our key installations.

Away from home, the SAF has also mounted more than 20 humanitarian aid and disaster relief efforts. Over the last 2 years, the SAF has assisted in the search and rescue operations of Air Asia QZ8501, provided assistance to our neighbours during the Kelantan flood and worked closely with the Nepalese Army in disaster relief operations after the Nepal earthquake. Most recently, in October last year, the SAF was deployed to help fight haze-causing fires in Indonesia, discharging more than 400,000 litres of water and in the process, extinguishing more than 50 hotspots in Sumatra. As a responsible member of the international community, the SAF also contributes to international counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and was deployed for six years in Afghanistan to support the international reconstruction effort. Over the past year, the SAF has also contributed to the multinational coalition to counter ISIS.

The SAF continues to receive positive feedback and accolades from international partners for its servicemen's professionalism and contributions in these deployments. A strong and capable SAF is not possible without the continued commitment and fighting spirit of our people. President Dr Tony Tan, at the opening of the thirteenth Parliament earlier this year, stressed that Singaporeans, and that includes each and every one of us here, have a part to play in keeping Singapore's society united and resilient. Therefore, we depend on you, as newly minted Specialists and leaders of the SAF, to help the men and women under your charge understand and internalise the importance of a strong defence. This will not be easy as your soldiers will come from diverse backgrounds, each with their own beliefs, expectations and challenges. Train your soldiers well and train them hard as you have done so yourselves. Inspire them to do more than they imagine possible. Exemplify the values that have been instilled in you. This will put you in good stead to lead with pride, excel in your field, overcome adversities with your fighting spirit and serve in this new role with honour and integrity.

I would also like to thank your parents and loved ones who have stood beside you throughout this journey. To all the family members and friends present today, I am sure that the graduands will agree that your support and encouragement has been and will continue to be invaluable in motivating them to give their best in their service to the nation.

Today's Graduation Parade represents one of the first milestones in your NS journey, as you will go on to assume greater responsibilities as you mature in your roles. Generations before you have done their duty to keep Singapore safe and secure, and we now look to you to take on the responsibility of defending our home, to keep

our nation safe and strong for the years ahead. I welcome all of you as Specialists of the Singapore Armed Forces and I wish you all the best as you embark on your leadership journey! WITH PRIDE WE LEAD

**News Release:**

- 1,174 Graduate as SAF Specialists (MINDEF\_20160303001.pdf)

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