



SPEECH

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Speech by Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry Of Culture, Community and Youth, Mr Baey Yam Keng, at the 29/2016 Specialist Cadet Course Graduation Parade, at Pasir Laba Camp, On 24 Nov 16, 1830hrs

24 Nov 2016

Graduands of the 29/2016 Specialist Cadet Course,

Parents, Grandparents,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good evening to all of you.

To the graduands, congratulations on successfully completing the Specialist Cadet Course. You have, over the past 22 weeks of rigorous training, demonstrated your perseverance and determination. You overcame all odds to earn the right to wear the chevron. This parade marks an important milestone in your service to the nation as it signifies the beginning of your journey as Specialists of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF). As Specialists, you are warfighters, trainers and leaders. You will be entrusted with the responsibility to train and develop your soldiers to their full potential and, when called upon, to lead them into battle to defend our homeland.

Singapore has enjoyed many years of peace, a peace that we must never take for granted. The world today is much more interconnected, complex and unpredictable than it was before. We have to constantly stay vigilant against a myriad of traditional and non-conventional threats, of which one of the most pressing one is the threat of terrorism. In the past two years, we have arrested more than a dozen radicalised Singaporeans. Most were self-radicalised and several even tried to go to the Middle East to join, and fight for, ISIS. This threat is very real to Singapore. Katibah Nusantara, the Southeast Asian military unit of ISIS, has begun to direct more targeted propaganda at Southeast Asia. We have also seen the establishment of an Islamic State wilayah (province) in the southern Philippines. Earlier this year, we saw the first successful attack by ISIS in Malaysia, with a grenade blast at a nightclub in Puchong. More recently, we uncovered a plot to attack Marina Bay by firing a rocket from Batam. While the suspects were arrested before the attack could take place, it is a reminder of how close the threat of terrorism is to our shores.

Our security agencies, the SAF and the Home Team, have been working hard to step up our readiness to combat such threats. Just last month, on the 17th and 18th of October, Singapore's largest anti-terror exercise was conducted. The SAF and the Home Team developed new operating procedures to respond effectively to concurrent attacks across the island by terrorists armed with firearms and improvised explosive devices. The involvement of volunteers from the People's Association in the exercise also demonstrated the importance of community playing its part to keep Singapore safe and secure. Beyond physical harm, when terrorists seek to sow discord among our communities and disrupt our multi-ethnic harmony, our best defence is for every Singaporean to support one another and keep our social cohesion strong. In this respect, National Service has not only been a central pillar to the development of a credible SAF, it has also brought together Singaporeans from different backgrounds and races, and helped us build common bonds of unity as fellow Singaporeans.

As Singaporeans, and even more so as leaders in the SAF, your role extends beyond the battlefield to the hearts and minds of your soldiers. It is your duty to help the soldiers you lead understand why we need a strong defence, and why their commitment to our nation's defence is critical. Your contributions, on and off the battlefield, will strengthen the resilience of our people, helping to keep Singapore secure in this uncertain security environment.

You also have ahead of you the challenging and important task of ensuring that you and your soldiers are well-trained and ready for any threats that may come our way. Many generations of leaders have worked tirelessly to protect our stability and our way of life. It is now your turn to step up to the mantle, and protect the peace that our forefathers had painstakingly won. Lead by example and take pride in your duties. Demand the highest standards and build cohesive teams. Engage your soldiers and show them that you always have their best interests at heart, and they will follow you.

To the family and friends of the graduands, I would like to thank you for your continued support for our servicemen. Your encouragement has been crucial in helping them get through some of the toughest training that they will ever face. For many of our graduands, your unwavering support made it possible for them to stand here today, proud to begin their journey as Specialists of the SAF.

National Archives of Singapore

To the graduands, the rank that you are about to don is an affirmation of the nation's trust and confidence in you. The Specialist Cadet Course has laid strong foundations for your journey ahead. If you stay true to your foundations, your journey ahead will be bright and meaningful. Believe in yourself, never rest on your laurels, do your very best, and serve our country with honour. Singapore depends on every one of you here to keep us safe, secure and strong in the years ahead.

With Pride We Lead.

News Release:

- 1,018 Graduate as SAF Specialists (MINDEF_20161124001_1.pdf)