



SPEECH

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Speech by Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office, Ministry Of Manpower & Ministry Of Foreign Affairs, Mr Sam Tan Chin Siong at the 31/2016 Specialist Cadet Course Graduation Parade, Pasir Laba Camp on 25 May 17

25 May 2017

Graduands of the 31/2016 Specialist Cadet Course,

Parents, Family members and Loved ones of our Graduands,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

NA very good evening to all of you,

I would like to firstly express my heartiest congratulations to the Graduands, to the people on the parade square now, for completing the Specialist Cadet Course. The discipline and tenacity that you have demonstrated in the past six months of rigorous training is indeed commendable. You have earned the right to wear the chevron that sets you apart, as a Specialist of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF). Your leadership and combat skills will inspire the men and women under your command to perform their best in the defence of Singapore. This is a very heavy responsibility. But I have confidence that you will be able to rise to the challenge. I know this from personal experience because I was once Officer Commanding of a Company during my NS days. In fact coming back to this place is like



homecoming to me, because in 1976, I was here to do my BMT (Basic Military Training) combat training. In 1977, I came back here again to do my OCS (Officer Cadet School) training. So now coming here as a Reviewing Officer, to see another generation of Specialist Cadets completing the course, during the parade, really makes me feel very, very proud of all of you.

This year, Singapore commemorates the 50th anniversary of National Service, or we call it NS50. The theme for NS50 is "From My Generation to Yours". Decades of hard work, sacrifice, and commitment by generations of National Servicemen have built the SAF to what it is today – advanced, effective, and capable. The baton has been passed to you, the next generation of National Servicemen, to serve our country with pride and honour.

NS has been an integral part of our nation-building efforts. Generations of Singaporeans of all backgrounds are brought together for a common objective and purpose. This solidarity of our communities is now more important as our security environment becomes increasingly complex. Singapore's multi-racial and multi-cultural society coupled with decades of peace and prosperity, makes us the ideal target for terrorists. We must therefore be vigilant, and be prepared for attacks that can and will get through one day.

Singapore has experienced near misses, such as the foiled rocket attack on Marina Bay Sands just last year. However, we are fully aware of terror attacks that have succeeded in other parts of the world. On 22nd March this year, an assailant drove a car into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge in London, before fatally stabbing a police officer. Five lives were lost and about 50 others were injured. And just over a week later on 3rd April, a suicide bomber caused an explosion on an Metro train in Saint Petersburg, Russia, as it was travelling through the city centre. 14 people were killed, and dozens were injured. Just two days ago, a major terrorist carnage took place in Manchester, England. A suicide bomber blew himself up, killing 22 people, and injuring 64 others, mostly children and young people. And the most recent terrorist attack just happened yesterday night in Jakarta, Indonesia - very close to Singapore. A bomb went off, killing nine people, and injuring another 10. All these terrorist attacks can happen anywhere in the world, including Singapore. So they are therefore a clear and present danger.

Let us not take the peace we enjoy today for granted. We live without fear of war or subjugation because the men and women of the SAF guard our air, land and sea 24/7. You,

who will become Specialists in the SAF, will now join them in defending our home and families. At a National Service appreciation ceremony on 9th April, Minister for Defence Dr Ng Eng Hen said of the terror attacks, "It could happen tomorrow, it could happen years from now. When it happens, we must ask ourselves how Singaporeans will respond."

Our response should be anchored on deep trust for one another, united by a common purpose, as one nation. As leaders in the SAF, we depend on you to unify your soldiers as Singaporeans who, regardless of race, language or religion, will band together to overcome setbacks together.

Remember that your role as a Specialist in the SAF is to nurture future batches of men and women placed under your charge. Lead by example with conviction and engage them sincerely, and with compassion. Even as you train them hard to be competent and resilient soldiers, when the going gets tough, give them the support and encouragement that they may need. Be their leader, their trainer, but also their friend, their guide and their mentor.

To the parents, family members and loved ones of our Graduands, I thank you for your unwavering support to our soldiers. You are important sources of motivation and encouragement for our servicemen and women. To the Graduands, today marks a day of celebration for the hard work that has brought you to this juncture. Today is also a day to thank those who have supported you, who have encouraged you, who have always been by your side. And I wish you all the best as you serve our country. Always remember the SWI motto as you carry out your roles and responsibilities:

 **WITH PRIDE WE LEAD**



News Release:

- 1,200 Graduate as SAF Specialists (MINDEF_20170525001.pdf)