



# SPEECH

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## **Speech by Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Communications and Information and Ministry of Education, Dr Janil Puthucheary at the 32/2017 Specialist Cadet Course Graduation Parade**

24 Aug 2017

Graduands of the 32/2017 Specialist Cadet Course,  
Parents and loved ones of our Graduands,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
A very good evening,

To all the Specialist Cadets on parade, congratulations on completing the course. Your achievement is by no means easy and is a testament of your discipline, your resilience, and your fighting spirit. The past five months have been five months of rigorous training. Today, you have earned the right to wear the chevron that signifies your journey as a leader of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF).

Two weeks ago, our nation came together to celebrate 52 years of independence. The SAF also commemorates 50 years of National Service (NS50) this year. For 50 years, NS and our armed forces have been the bedrock of our nation building and provided the peace and security we have enjoyed. These are things that are easy to take for granted and it is easy to forget how NS is critical to our survival and our stability. Our strategic vulnerabilities as a small nation will always remain, and a strong SAF is the ultimate guarantor of our peace and continued success. I am thankful that generations of National Servicemen, like you, have

been committed to serve and stepped up to lead others so as to safeguard our air, land, and sea.

We cannot, ever, let down our guard and need to always be prepared for potential attacks. The terrorist threat to Singapore remains at the highest in recent years. This is a very real and very close problem for us. Terrorist organisations have tried to exert its influence in Singapore. We have had recent cases of self-radicalisation -- the auxiliary police officers and (an) infant care assistant. These individuals, although they have been detained, are worrying examples of what can happen. The enemy out there is no longer distinguished by uniform and may now be hiding. It is worrying because the stakes are high. And it is not just lives and property, although those are of extreme immeasurable value, but our identity as a nation that may be threatened and may be damaged. Our identity as a peaceful, multi-racial, independent sovereignty.

The threat of radicalisation and terrorism is an on-going one that countries need to tackle together. The return of fighters from around the world to this region also suggests that the situation is very unlikely to improve any time soon. You can see the events in Marawi, Philippines unfolding. You can imagine it is not going to be something that will be resolved in a couple of weeks or months. It may take years before we witness the end of this chapter. These extremists have planned to establish bases in Southeast Asia and launch attacks against cities in ASEAN. We all need to play our part to combat terrorism together for the sake of our country and the sake of our neighbour(s). Singapore has offered the use of SAF's urban training facilities and a detachment of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to strengthen the intelligence and surveillance and has delivered humanitarian supplies to the hundreds of thousands of civilians that have been forced out of their homes by ISIS-affiliated groups in Marawi.

In this complex world, in this challenging security environment, it is crucial to have strong leadership across all ranks in the SAF. This includes every single one of you in the Parade today. To the graduands standing before us, you will be taking over the sacred duty of leading others in defence of our nation. You will assume the role of a leader and commander of the SAF that is not for any ordinary person. As Specialists in the SAF, we depend on you to lead and train the women and men under your charge, and to train and lead them well. Lead by example, be sincere, never underestimate or desert those under your charge, unify the soldiers you lead, and demand the highest standards from yourself and your men, the highest

standards of training and the highest standards of safety. In this era of troubled peace, we need leaders like you to prepare our men, our women and our nation for the unpredictable. Should war or terrorist acts happen on our soil, you must be -- and you are -- ready to respond and lead to protect our country and our home.

To the parents, the family, and the loved ones of our Graduands here today, I thank you for your unwavering support. You are important sources of motivation and encouragement for our servicemen and women to give their all and do their best for their nation and for their families. To the newly-minted leaders of the SAF, Singapore trusts and depends on every one of you to protect our way of life and to keep Singapore safe and secure. I wish you all the best as you lead and defend our country.

WITH PRIDE WE LEAD!

**News Release:**

- 1,134 Graduate as SAF Specialists (MINDEF\_20170824001.pdf)

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