



# SPEECH

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## **Speech by Mr Zaqy Mohamad, Minister of State, Ministry of National Development & Ministry of Manpower at the 42/2019 Specialist Cadet Course Graduation Parade**

20 Feb 2020

Graduands of the 42/2019 Specialist Cadet Course,

Parents and loved ones of Graduands,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good evening.

Congratulations to the graduands on your successful completion of the Specialist Cadet Course. Through the tough and rigorous training over the past 22 weeks, you have proven yourselves to be deserving of your Chevron rank. I would also like to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of your commanders and trainers, as well as the unwavering support from your families and loved ones. With this rank, you are entrusted to lead men and women to accomplish missions successfully and safely to protect Singapore's sovereignty and way of life.

### **Beginning of the SAF**

I am sure you are familiar with the humble beginnings of the SAF. When we were first established, shortly after we gained independence, the SAF had just two Infantry battalions that were not even under our command, we had just two Cessna aircraft that were leased to us by the Singapore Flying Club, and two wooden patrol boats. There were many other competing demands for resources to build our fledgling nation, but our leaders at the time saw the critical need for a credible military force. National Service was the only viable option for us to be self-reliant in defence. Through decades of

progress and development, the SAF today is capable of conducting a full spectrum of operations against a wide range of threats to our sovereignty, our security, and our national interest.

### **Security Landscape**

Globally, there are more than 100,000 deaths related to armed conflicts every year. The majority of them are from Middle Eastern and African countries. These conflicts include insurgencies, skirmishes, terrorism and civil wars. We must never take the peace that we enjoy in Singapore for granted. As such, we would need to continue to maintain a strong and adaptable SAF to enhance our peace and security through deterrence and diplomacy, and should these fail, we should secure a swift and decisive victory against any aggressor.

At the same time, hybrid threats are on the rise. Cyber threats, for instance, are not bounded by geography. These cyber-attacks could potentially leak or expose our personal data, hold our financial institutions ransom, compromise our national secrets, and even cripple our critical information infrastructure to disrupt essential services. A strong Cyber Defence is needed to safeguard Singapore against cyber-attacks. Through the Cyber NSF (full-time National Servicemen) Scheme, our Cyber Specialists will develop skills and expertise to defend Singapore against cyber threats, and lead the way in building up our Cyber Defences to safeguard Singapore.

### **SAF contributions**

The SAF will continue to be called upon to respond to a wide range of security threats, both conventional and unconventional, to protect Singapore and Singaporeans. In the midst of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 outbreak in China, the SAF again rose to the occasion and played a big role in supporting our nation's fight to contain the virus and prevent an outbreak here in Singapore. I know many Singaporeans drew comfort and assurance from seeing the SAF bringing its resources, leadership, and organisational abilities to bear, in support of Whole of Government efforts. The SAF should be proud of its efforts. And each and every one of you here today, should be proud to be part of an organisation that gives strength to Singapore and Singaporeans in our times of need.

### **Leaders of SAF**

Today, you will don the Specialist and Military Expert ranks, and become part of the backbone of the SAF, to lead soldiers on the ground to achieve mission success. I wish to offer two pieces of advice to guide you in your leadership journey ahead.

Firstly, always understand the intent and objectives of any assigned task. It is only with a clear understanding of the higher intent that you will be able to translate the task at hand into action plans that your soldiers can follow and execute. It is also only with a clear

understanding of the intent and objectives, that you will be able to adapt and react quickly on the fly to unforeseen circumstances, as they are bound to arise, and still achieve mission success.

Secondly, always have the courage of your convictions, and never be afraid to do the right thing. Doing the right thing may sometimes, and even often, mean doing things the unpopular way. It is almost always the most difficult thing to do than to take the easy way out. But for those of us entrusted in positions of leadership, doing the right thing is imperative. It matters firstly because it can directly affect our chances of mission success and the safety of our soldiers. But it also matters because your soldiers will look up to you as role models, leaders, as moral figures to emulate. It may not always be immediately clear what is the right thing to do, but do not fear. Whenever you are caught in a dilemma, let SAF's core values guide you; seek counsel from your superiors and those who have walked the path before you. I am confident that you will be able to live up to the high ethical standard expected of all SAF leaders.

### **Closing**

Graduands, as you celebrate another milestone in your National Service journey, do not forget to show appreciation to your families and loved ones for their unconditional love and support. Their support and commitment to defence are indispensable to our National Service system. I am proud to welcome all of you to join the ranks of Specialists and Military Experts of the SAF. I trust that you will do your utmost to take care of our mission, and the men and women under your charge. I wish you all the best in your leadership journey ahead.

### **With Pride We Lead!**

## **News Release:** National Archives of Singapore

- 42nd Specialist Cadet Graduation Parade Proceeds with Enhanced Measures  
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