



**SPEECH BY
THE HONOURABLE
PEHIN DATU LAILARAJA MAJOR GENERAL (RTD) DATO PADUKA SERI
HAJI AWANG HALBI BIN HAJI MOHD YUSSOF
SECOND MINISTER OF DEFENCE**

**THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF
BRUNEI-SINGAPORE DEFENCE SCHOLARS DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME 2018**

**MONDAY
19 SAFAR 1440 / 29 OCTOBER 2018**

3.00 PM

**SULTAN HAJI HASSANAL BOLKIAH
INSTITUTE OF DEFENCE AND STRATEGIC STUDIES**

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

And a Very Good Afternoon

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ
سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ

Yang Berhormat

Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Aminuddin Ihsan

Bin Pehin Orang Kaya Saiful Mulok Dato Seri Paduka Haji Abidin,

Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports;

Yang Berhormat Dayang Khairunnisa binti Haji Ash'ari

Member of the Legislative Council;

Yang Mulia

Major General Pengiran Dato Paduka Seri Aminan bin Pengiran Haji Mahmud

The Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces;

Permanent Secretaries of Ministries of Defence of Singapore and Brunei
Darussalam;

Permanent Secretary (Higher Education) of the Ministry of Education, Brunei
Darussalam;

Deputy Permanent Secretaries;

Commandant SAFTI MI, Singapore;

Defence Adviser of Singapore to Brunei Darussalam;

Directors;

Members of the Brunei-Singapore Defence Scholars Development Program;

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. I am very pleased to be here at the closing of the Brunei Singapore Defence Scholars' Development Programme 2018. This year's programme celebrates a decade of a joint effort by the two countries. I understand it is held with a different format, allowing members of the alumni to catch up with one another and share work experiences.
2. I appreciate very much the sharing of experiences by the scholars, especially their journey since joining the scholars' programme. I am particularly impressed by the sense of pride that the scholars have in providing service to country. And you should be proud! Defence is an enormous responsibility to shoulder.
3. Defence is usually associated with acquiring military capabilities, maintaining territorial integrity and participating in peace missions in support of international peace and security efforts.
4. However we know that defence is more than that. It relates to several aspects of nation-building. It is about recognizing the human element and developing the people behind it; it is about working together in a whole of government and whole nation approach and working together with international friends and partners.

5. That is why the Ministry of Defence invests a significant amount of resources in developing its human capability and capacity. The Supreme Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces Scholarship programme provides an early start to promising young people to fulfill their potential in a career in defence. From the interactions I have had with the scholars, I am pleased that the programme has produced officers who excel in their respective fields, and I am proud of their achievements. They represent some of the brightest young mind we have in government today.
6. Since its inception in 2007, the Brunei-Singapore Defence Scholars' Development Programme has become an integral component in the training and development of Singapore and Brunei defence scholars.
7. In addition to providing a foundation for lifelong leadership development for our future leaders, the programme serves to strengthen defence ties between the two countries; foster engagement between the future leadership.
8. In many ways, this programme is an extension of the close brotherly ties that both Singapore and Brunei share and enjoy at all levels. Our two countries share a long-standing, special relationship, (which was) born and raised from the close friendship between our then great and revered leaders, the late Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien and Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

9. Our leaders had long recognized that Brunei Darussalam and Singapore had many similarities and complementing strengths. It was natural that both sides nurtured and further strengthened relations throughout the years.
10. Today these relationship blossoms, our two countries enjoy frequent exchange of visits including at the highest levels.
11. His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam was in Singapore for a State visit last year; while Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong was in Brunei to join celebrations commemorating the Golden Jubilee of His Majesty's accession to the throne. This year, we had the honour of receiving President Halimah Yacob, for her first overseas visit. Currently HRH the Crown Prince is in Singapore, Leading a group of young leaders on an annual Young Leaders Programme the 6th Series.
12. Cooperation between Brunei Darussalam and Singapore continues to grow both in scope and depth.
13. Defence is a key pillar in our relations, and an area where we have long standing cooperation. We have had exchanges of notes in 1981 and 1983 – prior Brunei Darussalam's resumption of our independence – but our defence relations started much earlier, in the 70s (in 1976). That means our troops have been training alongside each other for more than forty years!

14. Now, both countries conduct regular dialogue, training and joint exercises involving the three services, as well as various exchange and interaction programmes. As we speak, some of our Singapore Colleagues are training in the jungles of Temburong enduring the famous mount/or Bukit Biang, while some of our own officers and personnel are undergoing various courses in Garden City State, Singapore.
15. These have promoted closer personal working relations to a level where we are able to work very well with each other. This is apparent during the large-scale exercises of ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus, as an example. Three years ago, the SAF and RBAF medical teams worked together in their deployment to Nepal for an HADR operation following the 2015 earthquake.

Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

16. The outlook for Brunei's and Singapore's defence relations is excellent.
17. Both countries have a solid foundation to pursue even deeper cooperation. Here I see the scholars playing a big role. I hope at the Ministry level, we can encourage more collaborative efforts between us, especially involving scholars.
18. Advances in technology have made it much easier to embark on projects. Whereas Brunei and Singapore are only two hours or less apart by flight, distance has become less of a limiting factor.

19. That same technology has also enabled us to keep in touch with friends. I hope the scholars will continue to strengthen their bonds of friendship, as I have no doubt you will have many opportunities to work together in the course of your careers. I have found this to be true; throughout my service in defence and in government, I have often found myself reconnecting with old friends in professional settings. [Old soldiers never die but fade away].
20. The value of the Brunei-Singapore Scholars' Development programme is evident, and the Ministry of Defence of Brunei Darussalam will continue its unwavering support.
21. I hope to be able to witness an alumni gathering ten years from now to celebrate another significant milestone achievements of this unique and special relationship.
22. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to everyone (past and present) who has contributed to the success of this programme.
23. I commend the partnership between the Centre for Leadership Development of SAFTI Military Institute Singapore and the Scholarship and Training Unit of the Ministry of Defence Brunei. I appreciate very much all the hard work that goes behind making the programme what it is today.

24. I would also like to put on record my appreciation to the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports; and the Society for Community Outreach and Training Brunei (SCOT), for their relentless support in this year's programme. I thank in particular, Yang Berhormat Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Aminuddin Ihsan, the Minister of Culture Youth and Sports for his personal involvement in this year's programme. As former Commander of Royal Brunei Armed Forces, he is also very much instrumental in shaping this programme.
25. And to the scholars; I wish you all the best as you pursue your own careers. I look forward to hearing about your progress in the coming years. You are our "Fixed Deposit" which will undoubtedly reap a very handsome dividend now and in the future.
26. I end this remark with quotes from John Furhmen in his book 'Leading Leaders to Leadership : 21 secrets for Leveraging Your Way to Greater Success. "In striving for your objectives, you'll discover hidden strengths and talents you didn't know you had. All you needed to do was look for them they've been there all along".

Thank you.

وبالله التوفيق والهداية والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته