



**SPEECH BY**

**YANG BERTHORMAT**

**PEHIN DATU LAILARAJA MAJOR GENERAL (R) DATO PADUKA SERI**

**HAJI AWANG HALBI BIN HAJI MOHD. YUSSOF**

**SECOND MINISTER OF DEFENCE**

**AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF**

**16<sup>th</sup> EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2021**

**(as of 24 June 2021)**

**THURSDAY, 24 JUNE 2021 / 13 ZULKAEDAH 1442**

**3.00 PM**

**VIP LOUNGE, OFFICERS' MESS**

**BOLKIAH GARRISON**

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

سَيِّئًا لَكُمْ بِهِ

أَللَّهُ نَبِّ

Yang Mulia,

Major General (U) Dato Seri Pahlawan Haji Hamzah bin Haji Sahat,  
Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces

Your Excellencies High Commissioners and Ambassador  
and representatives

Permanent Secretaries

Service Commanders, and the Joint Force Commander

Deputy Permanent Secretaries

Senior Officials and Representatives from the Public Service  
Department and Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali

Professor Francesco Mancini and Professor Caroline Brassard  
from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National  
University of Singapore

(And, of course) Participants of the 16<sup>th</sup> MINDEF Executive  
Development Programme

***[niceties and acknowledgements of prior speakers]***

1. A very good afternoon to everyone, and to the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP) representatives, who are joining us virtually.
2. It is a pleasure for me to be here again at the closing of the 16th Executive Development Programme or EDP.
3. To all twenty-eight participants, I congratulate you warmly on completing the programme.
4. I note that this EDP has been conducted differently. The prevailing COVID-19 pandemic situation provoke us to be innovative in our approaches. This year's course is carried out in a hybrid setting – with online and physical components to ensure course objectives are met.
5. This in itself is a challenge, and I understand, it is also a first for the EDP to be held during Ramadhan. So, I must commend your commitment, and enduring perseverance over the past few months.

6. I am pleased to learn from the representative of this cohort, 462 Lt. Col Kamrin bin Haji Damit (a moment ago), that the course had found the programme both personally and professionally challenging and rewarding. Looking around the room, I sense a huge relief after participating and completing in this intensive course, and perhaps, a bit apprehensive as you will soon go back to face reality!
7. I thank Ms. Ampuan Yura Kasumawati, the Acting Director of SHHBIDSS for her welcoming remarks on the programme, noting particularly the close cooperation between the Institute and the LKYSPP, in ensuring high standards are met, and quality content is delivered during this difficult time.
8. I also appreciate the LKYSPP representatives, Professor Francesco Mancini, Vice Dean of Executive Education and Associate Professor in Practice, as well as, Professor Caroline Brassard, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Executive Education and Lead Faculty of the 16<sup>th</sup> EDP, for sharing with us, the various initiatives and support in fulfilling the EDP requirements made by the school in the current circumstances.

***[responsibility of leaders to address change and create progress]***

***Honoured Guests,***

9. We are well aware that change is inevitable. In the era of the fourth industrial revolution, we are seeing fast rapid changes in the digital age of communications and technological advancements. There is urgency for us to keep pace and adapt in an already complex environment.

10. In recalling excerpts of His Majesty Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, Sultan dan Yang Di-Pertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam's *Titah* on the occasion to mark Brunei Darussalam's 37<sup>th</sup> National Day, His Majesty stressed that:

***“An independent nation must keep abreast of development and create progress...”***

11. The progress which His Majesty stated is in the physical and spiritual development, and both must go hand in hand

to fulfil the nation's needs in which His Majesty viewed that:

***“... we need quality human capital that is determined and educated in worldly and spiritual aspects as well as capable in meeting all challenges”.***

12. This particular *Titah* underlines the importance of being holistic and balanced in our development. It reminds us that in an ever-changing environment, we must always develop ourselves, grow and adapt to take advantage of new opportunities, and ensure relevance in the face of challenges. This is how we can remain independent, secure and resilient.
13. In safeguarding the people's well-being and sustaining the growth of a nation, at the very core is responsible Leadership at all levels. We see the EDP, as an investment in problem solving and decision-making that fits the nation.
14. I see this as crucial in enhancing professionalism, and fulfilling the enormous tasks, entrusted to policymakers and planners across government.

15. Alhamdulillah, we have been able to see benefits and returns on this investment. I recognise many in this room who are alumni of the MINDEF EDP, and several participants had gone on to serve higher posts in the Government.
  
16. For the Ministry of Defence and the Royal Brunei Armed Forces, the EDP will continue to be an important component for the development of our senior officers as we aspired in the first Defence White Paper of 2004, and instilled further in the following three Defence White Papers including the recently released in conjunction with Royal Brunei Armed Forces Diamond Jubilee Anniversary, to ensure we continue building excellence in leadership and professional development.

***[contribution of organisations towards national agenda]***

***Honoured guests,***

17. We have also seen change comes with unexpected challenges. It has been nearly two years since the

outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which brings another layer of complexity, affecting social, economic and security aspects of society. With the recent rolling out of national vaccination programmes, we hope to see a semblance of normalcy and begin to move towards a recovery phase.

18. Given the growing uncertainties, governments continue to face difficulties in balancing priorities for the benefit of the people and nation within the constraints of resources. This reinforces the need for strong advocacy for a whole-of-government and nation approach.
19. For in any organisation, we must strive to better ourselves by raising the organisational capabilities, transforming ourselves in ensuring our policies are aligned towards achieving the national development agenda, and for us, is the realization of Brunei Vision 2035.
20. It is with this in mind, we in the Ministry of Defence, see it important to undertake a holistic defence strategy as we pursue to be a formidable armed force and reliable partner. As elaborated in the recently launched Defence



White Paper 2021, there is much to explore through collaboration, especially by leveraging on science and technology, as well as strengthening collaboration in research and development to remain steadfast, and future-ready.

21. And this is where I see the Policy Exercise Papers or PAE as the most significant contribution in ensuring progress is made. I am delighted to see varying coverage of policy areas from social, economic, security, financial, cyber and media as well as transport and environment.
22. I am most encouraged that key stakeholders continue to be consulted and engaged throughout the process. I believe this approach provides a significant contribution to national conversations relating to the country's development.
23. And with the active participation of representatives from different ministries and wide backgrounds as well as military friends from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore, I am certain this opened up broader perspectives and enriched the learning experience.

***Honoured guests, participants of the 16th EDP,***

24. Upon leaving this programme, I urge each of the EDP participants to:

... keep in mind and appreciate the processes of dialogue...

... practice and embed the approach as a government and nation, as well as,

... be sensitive and pro-active as change takes time and requires continued commitment.

25. As individuals and officials holding office, we must be conscious in our thinking and of our actions. We are entrusted to uphold the highest of integrity and delivering in the best interest of our nations. For Brunei Darussalam, we are guided by the teachings of our religion and principles in the philosophy of *Melayu Islam Beraja* or Malay Islamic Monarchy.

26. Allow me to close with warm wishes to our friends from overseas, and to those returning, we pray for your safe

journey home. It is my earnest hope you will continue to strengthen bonds of friendship forged during the course. I am sure you will have many opportunities to work together in the course of your careers.

27. Personally, I find it most memorable experience attending regional and international courses during my time in service, and, I have often found myself reconnecting with old friends within Brunei and in international settings throughout my service in government.

28. Finally I take this opportunity, to thank Professor Francesco Mancini and Professor Caroline Brassard, and the team in the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and Acting Director and Staff of SHHBIDSS for together again delivering another successful programme.

Thank you.

وبالله التوفيق والهداية والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته