

**THE 51ST WAR MEMORIAL SERVICE IN COMMEMORATION OF
THE CIVILIAN VICTIMS OF THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION AND
TOTAL DEFENCE DAY COMMEMORATION EVENT
WELCOME ADDRESS BY SCCCI PRESIDENT MR ROLAND NG
15 FEBRUARY 2018**

尊敬的哈莉玛总统

王乙康部长，

各位来宾，

女士们、先生们

早上好！

51年来，每逢2月15日，新加坡中华总商会都风雨不改在这里为日本占领时期的死难人民举行悼念祭礼，目的是要提醒大家以史为鉴，居安思危，珍惜和平。只有和平，社会才能稳定，国家经济才会繁荣。今天也是全面防卫日，是全国上下传播防卫意识的主要日子。身为商

界领导，总商会承诺全力支持全面防卫，特别是经济与社会防卫方面，我们义不容辞，只有全民一心，在各自岗位上保卫家国，我们才能守住和平。接下来我以英语发言。

Madam President Halimah Yacob

Mr Ong Ye Kung, Minister for Education and Second Minister for Defence

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Thank you for joining us this morning at the Civilian War Memorial service. Since our late founding Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew unveiled this memorial in 1967, we have gathered here every year on the 15th of February – the day Singapore fell to the Japanese 76 years ago – to remember those who lost their lives during the Japanese Occupation.

2. This year, for the first time in 51 years, we are holding our memorial service in conjunction with the Total Defence Day Commemoration Event. It is only fitting that we do so, as the story of the Civilian War Memorial is a good example of Total Defence in action. It shows the resolve of Singapore, as a young nation, to never forget, stay united, and rise above one of the darkest times of our history to build a better and brighter future together. For the business community, we appreciate the peace we now have and the importance of defending our country.

3. The idea for a civilian war memorial came about when, in 1962, remains of civilian victims of the Japanese Occupation were discovered in many places around Singapore. The leaders of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry rallied the community together to build a memorial and give these victims a dignified resting place. We witnessed generosity and stewardship, with the funds to build the memorial coming from members of the public, the business community and the Government. We saw harmony and understanding, where the initial decision to cremate the remains of civilian victims was abandoned in favour of burial, out of respect for different communities. We saw people of all

races and religions, from all walks of life, living out the values that underpin the pillars of Total Defence.

4. Therefore it is significant that today the Civilian War Memorial Service and the Total Defence Day Commemoration Event are held together for the first time. It is our privilege to welcome President Halimah Yacob as our Guest-of-Honour. Her presence underscores the unity of the people of Singapore and the values that we uphold and cherish.

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