

ERC/PR/2021

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**54<sup>TH</sup> WAR MEMORIAL SERVICE IN COMMEMORATION OF THE  
CIVILIAN VICTIMS OF THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION AND  
TOTAL DEFENCE DAY COMMEMORATION 2021**

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY SCCCI PRESIDENT ROLAND NG**

**TIME: 15 FEBRUARY 2021 (MONDAY) 9.30AM**

**VENUE: WAR MEMORIAL PARK**

Honourable Minister for Education and Second Minister for Finance  
Lawrence Wong,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning everyone!

For the past 54 years, the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCCI) has dedicated itself to holding the War Memorial Service every year without fail on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February, at the War Memorial Park along Beach Road. We hope our future generations can fully understand the importance of freedom and peace because of the lessons learnt from the Japanese Occupation, reiterating the importance of staying united, defending our country and being prepared for danger in times of peace.

Today is also Total Defence Day, an illustration of how Singaporeans work together to achieve the common objective of safeguarding Singapore's security and way of life. The six pillars of Total Defence: Military, Civil,

Economic, Social, Psychological and Digital Defence symbolise how all Singaporeans play their part to make the country even stronger.

### **Crisis Caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic**

This year's Total Defence Day is extraordinary, with the coronavirus pandemic hitting the world like a tsunami. In 2020, we experienced a global public health crisis. Livelihoods, plans and businesses were severely impacted. Faced with extreme uncertainty, people are worried about the prospects.

### **Unity and Resilience in an Ever-Changing World**

It is the responsibility of every Singaporean to adopt Total Defence as our all-round response to the threats and challenges caused by the pandemic, thereby guaranteeing Singapore's safety and security.

On this day in the previous years, besides the lessons learnt from the Japanese Occupation, the emphasis was on guarding against future threats. This year, we are indeed in the midst of a battle against COVID-19, doing our best to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic in all aspects. Singapore has always rallied through Total Defence, planned for the long term, strengthened crisis management ability, economic and social resilience and maintained global competitiveness. In the face of the outbreak, we were able to respond promptly and dynamically, implementing measures to stabilise employment and help businesses stay afloat, keeping our economy strong as we prepare for economic recovery. This is only possible because of the hard work put in by the Government, businesses and Singaporeans over the past half a century.

After a year of fighting COVID-19, we managed to bring the situation under control. This is the result of the Government's strong emphasis on Total Defence. However, we must remain vigilant while putting Total Defence into action. Although the circuit breaker measures had been

gradually eased and there have been slight changes to how the War Memorial Service is held this year, what remains unchanged are the lessons we learn from history and the importance of strengthening Singapore's national defence framework.

The SCCCI upholds the Spirit of Chinese Entrepreneurs, which embodies integrity, loyalty, contributing back to society and innovation. We hope to play our part in preserving Singapore's history and cultural heritage as well as contributing to Singapore's National Education efforts in promoting the history of the construction of the Memorial and holding the War Memorial Service through the partnership with the Government and community organisations.

In line with the blended learning model to be implemented by the Ministry of Education, the SCCCI is launching an e-book titled *The Story of the Civilian War Memorial*, for Singaporeans, especially the younger generation, to understand the nation-building journey from times of unrest to today's prosperity that Singaporeans from all races have gone through, to remember the spirit of sacrifice and dedication of our forefathers, further strengthening our national identity.

As long as we stay united, remain vigilant and play our part in Total Defence, we will be able to maintain a peaceful and stable society as Singapore moves towards economic prosperity. As a leader in the business community, the SCCCI is committed to fully support Total Defence, especially in the pillars of Economic and Social Defence. It is our responsibility to maintain peace, defend our homeland, continue our efforts to drive economic transformation and ensure that Singapore emerges stronger from the pandemic.

Thank you!