

Speech: Queen's Birthday Party 2017 in Singapore

Ms Indranee Rajah, Senior Minister of State for Law and Finance, Members of Parliament Mr Ang Wei Neng and Ms Cheryl Chan, Chief of Army Maj Gen Melvyn Ong, distinguished guests, your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen on behalf of my wife, Anne, and myself it is my honour and pleasure to welcome you all to Eden Hall this evening to celebrate the 91th birthday of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

This year is The Queen's Sapphire Jubilee, that is 65 years since she acceded to the throne to become our Head of State and Head of the Commonwealth. And even in her 92nd year, she continues to fulfil a schedule that would exhaust many people years younger than her a reflection of her steadfast commitment to the people of the United Kingdom and of the Commonwealth.

On behalf of the British community here in Singapore, I want to express our admiration and gratitude to Her Majesty and to HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, who celebrated his 96th birthday last week and we wish him a speedy recovery.

In challenging times such as our country has experienced recently with the terrorist attacks in London and Manchester and the dreadful fire last week in west London there is no doubt that the British people find comfort and reassurance in the enduring strength and stability of our institutions, which The Royal Family embodies. And The Royal Family's particular attachment to Singapore has been among the highlights in our bilateral relationship over the last 12 months.

In November last year, HRH The Princess Royal visited Singapore for the conference of the Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth meeting several Ministers and supporting two charities, the Mission for Seafarers and Riding for the Disabled.

Earlier this month, HRH Prince Harry helped dispel some of the stigma that still surrounds people living with HIV/AIDS and with mental health issues when he met some remarkable young Singaporeans, committed volunteers and their supporters here at Eden Hall and he was delighted to take part in an iftar at Jamiyah's Children's home in Geylang.

And just last week, HRH The Duke of York represented The Queen at the Commonwealth Science Conference. While in Singapore he called on President Tan and ESM Goh Chok Tong, met young Singaporean entrepreneurs, and hosted the first Singapore edition of his highly successful Pitch@Palace initiative.

Of course the last 12 months has seen major changes in the United Kingdom. It is almost a year to the day since the people of Britain decided that we should leave the European Union and forge a different path for our country. No one is pretending that the negotiations on which we are now embarked will be easy there will be ups and downs along the way but our shared values, our

shared commitment to free trade and tackling global economic and security challenges our shared belief in the rules-based international system make me confident that although the nature of our relationship with Europe will change, close cooperation with our neighbours will certainly continue.

And the United Kingdom's engagement with East Asia, and with Singapore in particular, will continue to strengthen too. Visits from the Chief of the Defence Staff and the First Sea Lord have underlined the close relationship between our armed forces. Our new British Defence Staff Asia Pacific has opened in Singapore. Our exchanges on cyber-security are deepening and our economic relationship continues to grow. Dyson opened a fantastic new Research and Development Centre here in March. GIC made a huge investment in student accommodation in the UK. Trade Minister Lim Hng Kiang and International Trade Secretary Liam Fox signed a revised Economic and Business Partnership in February. The Scottish Secretary, David Mundell, promoted great Scottish food and beverages.

Deputy Prime Minister Tharman was in London in January and returns this month And in May Senior Minister of State Sim Ann took part in the meeting of Commonwealth Trade Ministers. And on almost a weekly basis, officials are travelling in one direction or the other as the network of cooperation thickens.

In science and research, Singapore has probably more collaborations with researchers in the UK than with any other country. Our first Science and Innovation Strategic Dialogue in January identified new areas for cooperation. The UK Government's Chief Scientific Adviser has come to Singapore twice in the last year and in the last two weeks we have seen dozens of the UK's top scientists here for the Commonwealth Science Conference and global gatherings of life scientists.

But this evening, we have chosen to celebrate great British design. You can hardly have missed the example of great industrial design from JCB over there. The cars on display from Jaguar Landrover are the last word in elegance and engineering. And around the house you will see examples of great British architectural design and an amazing virtual reality experience from Blippar in our Imagination Room. These reflect our uncanny ability to blend technology with creativity to make products that are useful and beautiful. Because it's not Apple's technology that sells. Anyone can do that. It's Sir Jony Ive's stunning designs.

Each year it is a pleasure for us to welcome so many friends and partners to the Queen's Birthday Party. I want to thank you for the enormous contribution you make to enhancing links between Britain and Singapore and promoting UK interests here. Particular thanks are due to our colleagues at the British Chamber of Commerce for their tremendous work in supporting British business in Singapore. And I take this opportunity to recognise the work of Brigitte Holtschneider, who is stepping down after ten years as Chief Executive. At the British Club, Sean Boyle will also be leaving after several years as General Manager and it was my honour to be able to present him earlier this year with the British Empire Medal. The British Association too continues to do great work. And there's one other group of special guests I would like to

recognise this evening. Yesterday was the red carpet opening at Marina Bay Sands of the Downton Abbey Experience. An opportunity for you all to experience firsthand life at Downton Abbey. For the next few weeks you can walk through recreations of some of the rooms up and downstairs from the world famous TV series and then enjoy some great British produce in the special tearoom.

And joining us here tonight are some of Britain's most distinguished actors from the cast: Jim Carter, Phyllis Logan, Laura Carmichael, Kevin Doyle, Michael Fox, and Sophie Shearer. You may know them better as Carson, Mrs Hughes, Lady Edith, Mr Mosely, Parker and Daisy. Thank you for joining us this evening.

Senior Minister of State, Mr Ang, Ms Chan, Maj Gen Ong, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to close by thanking the people who have worked so hard to prepare this evening's event. First, our many very generous sponsors, they are listed in your programmes and I hope you are enjoying the delicious food and beverages that several of them are providing from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The Gurkha Pipes and Drums, and the Singapore National Cadet Corps Command Band. The Corps of Drums of the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards. Niall McWilliam, some of whose paintings are displayed around the house. I want to thank my colleagues at the High Commission and the British Council and above all, thanks to all of you for helping us to celebrate Her Majesty's 91st Birthday this evening. Finally, thank you to Ms Joanna Paul who will now perform the National Anthem of the Republic of Singapore and shortly thereafter of the United Kingdom.

View photos from the event [here](#).

[News story: Record number of events will hail UK Armed Forces](#)

The ninth annual Armed Forces Day will centre on Liverpool, where regulars, reserves, their families and veterans will gather for a parade, receptions, displays, a ship visit and Red Arrows and Typhoon flypasts.

There will be hundreds more significant events to thank the UK's Forces, from Caerphilly to Plymouth to Edinburgh in the UK and from the Falkland Islands to Cyprus overseas.

Ahead of attending today's event in Liverpool, the Prime Minister said:

Our world-leading Armed Forces work day and night to defend our country and our way of life, both at home and abroad.

In the aftermath of the Manchester attack, military personnel played a vital role on UK streets, providing visible reassurance to our communities. And further afield they continue to take the fight to Daesh in Iraq and Syria, helping to drive the terrorists back and give ordinary people in those countries the chance to rebuild their lives.

I am proud to be attending the Armed Forces Day celebrations in the great city of Liverpool this year, joining thousands of people in expressing our gratitude to the men and women who do so much to preserve our freedom.

Ahead of Liverpool's event Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon announced that nearly 11,000 service personnel have been able to get on the housing ladder or change their home using Forces Help to Buy scheme payments. Since its launch in April 2014 more than £163m has been paid to scheme applicants, allowing service personnel and their families to borrow up to half their salary to buy their own home.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

We owe a huge gratitude to the men and women of our Armed Forces and salute their service in keeping us safe each and every day.

As we celebrate Armed Forces Day there are 10,000 regulars and reserve personnel serving now on NATO operations. There are Royal Navy ships serving in the Gulf, the British Army is supporting UN peacekeeping in South Sudan, and the Royal Air Force are patrolling the skies above the Black Sea region in the campaign against Daesh terrorism and on NATO deployments; the Royal Navy is helping protect the Gulf; the Army is peace-keeping in South Sudan and Somalia; and the Royal Air Force is patrolling the skies above the Black Sea.

The Help to Buy milestone demonstrates our promise to ensure that our Armed Forces and their families can enjoy the stability of owning their own home. It is part of our commitment to them in return for the immeasurable commitment they make to us.

Today's event in Liverpool will consist of a large-scale military parade from St George's Hall to the Pier Head supported by bands. Reflecting Liverpool's strong connection with the Royal Navy, the Type-23 frigate HMS Iron Duke will be docked in the city. In the air there will be flypasts by the Red Arrows, Typhoon and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. Military villages of static displays, machines and equipment will complete the show.

Liverpool's Assistant Mayor and Cabinet Member for Culture, Tourism and

Events, Councillor Wendy Simon, said:

It is a privilege to host Armed Forces Day and there is a real buzz about the city as we get closer to Saturday's celebrations. > We are a city renowned for its success when staging large, outdoor events and Saturday will be no exception. As the national focal point for Armed Forces Day we will make sure that when the spotlight shines on us, we will do all that we can to make the city, the armed forces and the UK proud.

UK Armed Forces are currently involved in over 20 operations in more than 25 countries, from South Sudan to Iraq. Also present will be many veterans that make-up the estimated 2.56 million Armed Forces veteran community living in the UK. Young cadets will be present too; together the Sea, Army, and Air cadet forces have almost 100,000 members, many of whom will be at events up and down the country.

[News story: Historic North Wales town announced as host for Armed Forces Day 2018](#)

The event in the historic seaside town will be supported by the Ministry of Defence, together with the Welsh Government and Conwy Borough Council.

The announcement comes as events are held across the UK to mark Armed Forces Day, including the national event this year hosted by the City of Liverpool. Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will join the First Sea Lord and thousands of people at the South Wales celebrations in Caerphilly to honour the work and dedication of our brave Servicemen and women deployed around the world.

Defence Minister for the Lords, Earl Howe said:

Llandudno represents a superb venue for next year's celebrations and I'm sure the town will bring together the whole nation in celebrating our Armed Forces.

Wales was the proud host of the national event in 2010 when thousands of people celebrated in Cardiff. The support from the Welsh Government and local communities, coupled with the rich and vibrant history of Llandudno, means that the town is the ideal choice to make the event even more successful in 2018.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

I'm delighted that the national Armed Forces Day event will return to Wales in 2018. This time next year, we will see veterans of wars gone by and soldiers serving in conflicts around the world today marching side by side in Llandudno, united in pride in service to their country.

In Wales we have a special connection with our Armed Forces and this annual event gives the public an opportunity to show their appreciation and pride for our soldiers, sailors and air personnel who sacrifice so much for others.

Our debt of gratitude also extends to the families they leave behind and the veterans past and present who have dedicated years of their lives to service. I am honoured to mark Armed Forces Day today – and in the years to come – in their company.

Councillor Gareth Jones, Leader of Conwy County Borough Council, said:

We are proud and privileged to be named as the Host of the National Armed Forces Day in 2018.

Conwy County has a deep affiliation with the Armed Forces and a strong historical link. Llandudno will be a great destination to showcase the outstanding work of the Armed Forces past and present.

The event will be supported by all the North Wales Councils and key colleagues across Wales. Serving personnel and veterans of our Armed Forces Community will be assured of a very warm welcome and an event that thanks them for their commitment to keeping the country safe.

North Wales has many current and historic links to the Armed Forces, including and many Regular and Reserve Army units, including the Royal Welsh recruit from there. RAF Valley on Anglesey, is home to a fast jet training base. Nearly 10,000 veterans live in Conwy, supported by a number of local and national charities.

This year, events along the coast included an Armed Forces parade in the nearby town of Caernarfon on 17 June, and today a Forces' themed street party is being held in Conwy.

[Press release: Secretary of State praises role of military at Armed Forces Day in South Wales](#)

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will join thousands of people at the South Wales celebrations in Caerphilly to honour the work and dedication of our brave Servicemen and women deployed around the world.

Mr Cairns will deliver a reading at the traditional Drumhead Service against the backdrop of Caerphilly Castle, before enjoying a packed programme of events which will include military displays and live music.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

On operations at home and overseas, the men and women of the armed forces work to protect the security, independence and interests of our country 24-hours-a-day, 365-days-a-year.

In Wales we have a special connection with our Armed Forces and this annual event gives the public an opportunity to show their appreciation and pride for our soldiers, sailors and air personnel who sacrifice so much for others.

Our debt of gratitude also extends to the families they leave behind and the veterans past and present who have dedicated years of their lives to service. I am honoured to mark Armed Forces Day 2017 in their company.

Admiral Sir Philip Jones, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, said:

It's a huge pleasure to celebrate Armed Forces Day in Caerphilly.

The young sailors and marines under my command work incredibly hard to defend the UK and to protect our interests overseas. But they cannot do it alone. They rely on their loved ones to support them, and they need the British public to understand the commitment and sacrifices required to keep us safe in an uncertain and competitive world.

I know how proud the people of Wales are of the Royal Navy, and the Army and Royal Air Force too. Armed Forces Day is an opportunity to thank service personnel and their families, and to celebrate the contribution of reservists, veterans and the youth and cadet organisations who make such an important contribution to national

life.

The Welsh Rugby Union is also showing its support for the British Armed Forces this year. Serving Members of the Army, Navy and RAF were invited to mingle with the Wales national rugby team at their training base in the Vale of Glamorgan ahead of their departure for their summer tour to Tonga and Samoa.

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales has further shown its support by flying the Armed Forces Day flag above Gwydyr House, the department's headquarters in London.

Notes to editors

- The 2017 National Armed Forces Event will be held in Liverpool on 24 June.
- You can find out more about Armed Forces Day [here](#)

Government response: Statement responding to Camden Council's decision to evacuate residents of the Chalcots estate

This is the response from a Department for Communities and Local Government spokesperson:

The safety of residents is paramount.

Camden Council and the Fire and Rescue Service are rightly working together to implement their responsibilities under the Emergency Fire Safety Review that we sent them yesterday (22 June).

As we said, in the most serious cases this involves residents being moved out of their homes while they are made safe.

This is clearly distressing for those involved and the every effort will be made to reduce the disruption as they make temporary arrangements in line with their emergency plans.

The government, through London Resilience, is offering every assistance in getting this done as swiftly and safely as possible.