DRAFT 1

BY : **CHIEF OF DEFENCE FORCE**

DATE : **1 JUNE 2021**

EVENT : **MAF DOCTORAL ASSOCIATION (MAFDA), INAUGRAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OPENING SPEECH**

VENUE :**RECORDING (RUANG PERKASA)**

(Time: 12 minutes)



Lt Gen Dato’ William Stevenson (Retired), the esteemed Pro-Tem President of the Malaysian Armed Forces Doctoral Association,

Honoured members and delegates of the MAFDA,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

*Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh*

and salam sejahtera,

1. Praise be to Allah, by whose blessings and grace, we are allowed to convene today for the inaugural Annual General Meeting of the Malaysian Armed Forces Doctoral Association.
2. It is indeed an honour and privilege for me to be invited here today to address the members of MAFDA at the inaugural AGM. My sincere appreciation to the President and Pro-Tem Committee of MAFDA for giving me this opportunity as well as the honour of being the first Patron of this learned circle of military academicians.
3. The inception of the MAFDA is a milestone for the Malaysian Armed Forces in the area of life-long learning as it is the first ever Association whose members must have completed their doctoral studies and is either a serving or retired Malaysian Armed Forces personnel. Needless to say that the Malaysian Armed Forces and Society at large will definitely benefit from the formation of this Association. For that, I extend my heartiest congratulations to the Pro-Tem Committee and members alike for their vision, initiative and commitment towards the establishment of this association.

Learned members of MAFDA,

1. Samuel P Huntington opined in his aptly titled seminal work “*The Soldier and the State*” that a Professional Organisation must possess three key characteristics, namely, Expertise, Responsibility and Corporateness. Similar to the construct above, it is universally acknowledged that the Malaysian Armed Forces is a professional organization responsible for the management of violence. Thus as members of a professional organization, MAF personnel are expected to continually strive for excellence. This is in accordance with the ethos set by Huntington, as the military profession requires comprehensive study and training that results in expertise of a unique set of skills to responsibly organize violence within their various specializations.
2. As Society and the Government demand that the military profession acquire and maintain expertise in these fields, it is also compelled to develop and generate new ideas within their respective fields of study. This is more so granted the nature of conflict today with highly extended spectrum of activities, populated by a myriad of actors, whether state or non-state, with far reaching ramifications towards all facets of life individually or collectively that is continuously and increasingly influenced by Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity.
3. Thus, to succeed and fulfill the trust of the people, we must acquire and maintain a body of personnel tutored at the highest tier of academic achievement bearing Doctoral qualifications that is deemed and recognized as the acme of education and pinnacle of expertise. For that purpose, the Government has provided allocations for military personnel to pursue their doctoral qualifications in a plethora of disciplines, in the fields of Defence Technology, Satellite Navigation, Radar and Electronic Warfare, Material Engineering, Resources Management, Leadership and Operational Research just to name a few. Similarly, quite a number have also attained their doctorate on their own sponsorship in a number of other fields.
4. Needless to say that the Malaysian Armed Forces will need more doctoral qualified personnel to managed a sophisticated, complex and highly diversified organization as the demands of Huntington’s Expertise increases exponentially.
5. Whilst the various disciplines will assist the Arms and Services of the bearer, it is imperative that a mechanism exists to synergise and consolidate these areas to form a holistic and comprehensive blue print for knowledge attainment within the Malaysian Armed Forces to effectuate the Defence White Paper. For that, I view MAFDA as the quintessential informal platform, to bridge the divide between the various disciplines within and beyond the Malaysian Armed Forces.
6. Additionally, MAFDA should also facilitate the extension of network amongst the various Defence and Security think tanks, research and academic organisations, and Institute of Higher Learnings in order to acquire more comprehensive and multi-dimensional insights amongst key stakeholders. The presence of retired officers in MAFDA with vast experiences will factor greatly in the balance between ‘*war on paper*’ and *‘real war’* aptly described by Clausewitz in creating an effective military force.
7. I fully believe that MAFDA close cooperation and collaboration with the likes of MiDAS, UPNM and PUSPAHANAS to disseminate their expertise and knowledge by conducting seminars or roundtable talks as part of the institutions’ curricula shall bring untold benefits across the platforms. In good time, I aspire to see MAFDA members to be among the faculty members of such prestigious academic organisations.
8. I need not reiterate the need and importance for MAFDA to establish and maintain the Association’s prestige for its views to be accepted by peers not just within the Malaysian Armed Forces but especially more so by the Government, organizations and individuals both domestically and internationally. I implore the members of MAFDA to walk the extra mile to collaborate, deliberate and eventually document the research of key and contemporary issues with the high fidelity and academic integrity.

Dato’-Dato’, ladies and gentlemen.

1. I read the MAFDA constitution which I am sure will guide and regulate the activities of the Association and members. Nonetheless, I caution all of us that no stones must be left unturned to ensure the impartiality and unbiased stand of MAFDA.
2. We are too often reminded on how the image of prestigious associations, including those from the academia, was tarnished through unprincipled manipulations by irresponsible entities. Similarly, far too often have we seen that associations, established in the same mould as MAFDA, been manipulated as pressure groups to coerce public opinion and organizational policies to fulfill hidden agendas of irresponsible entities.
3. Despite being an association established and regulated under the Societies Act 1966, MAFDA carries with it the prestige, legacies, values and ethos of the Malaysian Armed Forces. I sincerely believe that the majority of people will perceive that insights from MAFDA will reflect indirectly the unofficial stand of the Malaysian Armed Forces. This should continuously be the backdrop and constant reminder during deliberations and interactions with entities outside the Malaysian Armed Forces.
4. I am very confident that with the adherence to the Constitution, awareness of the Malaysian Armed Forces stand, and presence of other regulatory mechanisms placed by the Committee, MAFDA will assist in elevating the Malaysian Armed Forces to greater heights especially in the arena of intellectual discourses.
5. On a different note, I am certain that MAFDA will be an inclusive and not an exclusive association, which shall build bridges between personnel and retirees of various academic qualifications in the Malaysian Armed Forces and provide sound advice to the Higher Defence Organisation of contemporary issues.

Dato’-Dato’, ladies and gentlemen

1. Your professional maturity, after years of service in the Malaysian Armed Forces, precedes the level of knowledge and expertise you possess. As such, I am confident that you will rally that maturity, driven by knowledge and expertise to elect the Association’s President and Committee members to afford strong leadership and clear vision on your incredible journey towards an invigorating intellectual excellence.
2. I am also very certain that you will waste no time in etching MAFDA’s brand name as a niche body of intellectuals and position the Association as *Primus Inter Pares – First Amongst Equals* among other esteemed professional bodies in the country and beyond our shores.
3. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt gratitude and wish all MAFDA members the best in your future undertakings. Rest assured that I will afford necessary advice and guidance in my personal capacity as well as the Chief of Defence Force, to be worthy of the exalted position of Patron, which you have gracefully bestowed upon me. May our endeavours be blessed always by the Almighty and let us retain our dignity in everything that we do. With that, I wish everyone the best and may you all have a productive and fruitful Annual General Meeting.
4. *Wabillahi Taufiq Wal Hidayah Wasalamualikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh* and thank you.