

Address by the President of Latvia Egils Levits at the graduation ceremony for Land Force Military Leadership cadets of the Latvian National Defence Academy

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Egils Levits

National security



Honourable Parliamentary Secretary of the Defence Ministry!

Honourable Commander of the National Armed Forces!

Honourable Rector of the Latvian National Defence Academy!

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Dear graduates!

I

Today is one of the most important days of your life.

Becoming a lieutenant is a major achievement.

You and your parents and family can rightly be proud of this achievement.

The National Defence Academy has given you a good education, shaped you into selfless patriots of Latvia

II

With the receipt of this diploma, you are joining those military-trained Latvians who have fought for and defended the Latvian state, who have stood up for Latvia's freedom and independence from foreign powers.

III

You have also taken a pledge to stand guard for your country and people.

You have chosen the profession of soldier in a difficult and dangerous time for Europe and Latvia.

It is a noble decision.

Thank you for your courage and responsibility!

Thank you for your love of Latvia and your willingness to serve our country!

IV

The younger generations began to perceive the tragic events of our country's history in the 20th century as something belonging to the distant past.

From the point of view of common sense, they had to remain further and further in the history.

However, Russia's criminal invasion of Ukraine a year ago has ripped the wounds of our society anew.

The stories of pain that many elderly people born in Latvia still know about the crimes of the Soviet occupation have now become much more comprehensible to today's people.

The view of possible threats to the state and society is clearer.

V

We need to strengthen Latvia's defence in every possible way, while strengthening the common security of all of Europe.

It must also be effective in times of uncertainty and tension. It must be capable of protecting the Latvian state.

You will be part of this work in the future.

Our trusted allies are a solidary community of democratic European countries, the United States and Canada, with whom we stand with Ukraine in its just struggle against the Russian aggressor.

Our allies are the world's largest and most advanced military defence alliance - NATO, of which Latvia is also a full member.

We are on the side of truth.

We are on the side of justice.

We are on the right side of history.

VI

Many of us are moved by the courage and fighting spirit of Ukrainian soldiers.

What is happening in Ukraine reminds us once again of the importance of high morale of the troops and public will to resist as well of the importance of mutual cooperation between the armed forces and society.

Ukrainian heroism is an example to us.

From Ukraine we can learn resilience and self-belief, and the ability to inspire the world to fight against evil.

VII

Dear friends! New lieutenants!

History shows that every generation has the capacity and the duty to make the world a better and more just place.

Your time begins.

I wish you a bright future!

Be united and safe!

Your source of strength is Latvia - our common country.

Be a good role model for your subordinates!

Always do your utmost to protect our people, country and land!

Latvia is counting on you.



<https://www.president.lv/en/article/address-president-latvia-egils-levits-graduation-ceremony-land-force-military-leadership-cadets-latvian-national-defence-academy>