

S'poreans must put national interests first, says Ng Eng Hen

That must be the response in the face of attempts by external forces to influence countries in the region

Lim Min Zhang

Singaporeans must put their own national interests first, amid attempts by external forces to influence countries in the region, including Singapore, Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen said yesterday.

"We want to be relevant to the world and helpful to powers, big or small, but we do not want to choose sides or be asked to choose sides, or to be put in positions that bring short-term benefits but compromise the larger collective good," he said.

Speaking at the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (SCCCI) annual National Day dinner, Dr Ng said Singapore and the world are entering a period of great uncertainty and turbulence driven by a sharper ideological divide between the United States and China.

He cited how the US and China have stated publicly the positions their governments and militaries have taken up towards each other.

For instance, Dr Ng said the US has branded China as a "revisionist power", describing it as "a strategic competitor using predatory economics to intimidate its neighbours while militarising features in the South China Sea", among other things.

He pointed out that China, in its own defence White Paper, noted that "the US has severely undermined the regional strategic balance and the strategic security interests of regional countries", among other things.

Speaking to about 560 people, including business leaders, Members of Parliament and diplomats, Dr Ng said these are strong and clear



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words from both sides. "You, as businessmen... fully appreciate what happens when top management outlines your strategy to your units – it gets translated to ground actions. Sometimes slower, other times quicker, but eventually it will filter down to the last unit," he added.

On what Singapore should do, Dr Ng said that being a small country, it should not overestimate its ability to influence, let alone control, global affairs.

Amid new pressures, Singaporeans must keep their own identity, independence and interest foremost in all their dealings, said Dr Ng.

On what such pressures were, he cited Eastern Europe, where smaller countries such as the Baltic states have had to respond to external influences to divide their societies and shape their internal systems, even during elections.

"In our highly connected world, these external forces can affect countries in this region too, including Singapore. When that happens – and it will happen – we must put our own national interests first," he added.

Other than that, Dr Ng said, Singapore also has to maintain stability and security. "We cannot help others if we ourselves are divided."

Commemoration of Singapore's bicentennial year serves as a reminder that the country and the region are no strangers to big-power



DEFENCE MINISTER NG ENG HEN

NATIONAL INTERESTS COME FIRST

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contests, said Dr Ng, with external forces – over the past 700 years – periodically fighting proxy battles in the region, often at the expense of countries here. "The US-China rivalry can have that same potential impact on Singapore and this region," he added.

But Singapore has excellent relations with both the US and China, said Dr Ng, adding that the Republic holds firmly to the view that the US' presence in this region has contributed to stability and allowed Asia to prosper. And it also firmly believes that the peaceful rise of China benefits the world.

He thanked the SCCCI for its support of national defence, especially for national service, from the start in 1967, when the first two batches of recruits were enlisted.

The SCCCI had given each of the recruits a medallion, which had the words "*jing zhong bao guo*" inscribed in Chinese, meaning "loyalty to the country".

The SCCCI also raised funds – about \$1.39 million – in support of national defence in 1968.

"These early efforts by the chamber laid the foundation for a strong SAF today. And this chamber continues to give strong support to national defence," Dr Ng said.

"Against fake news and disinformation campaigns on social media that seek to divide Singaporeans, the SCCCI's efforts in helping to forge a cohesive society... will become more salient than ever."

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Singaporeans must put national interests first amid external influences: Ng Eng Hen



Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen said Singapore and the world are entering a period of great uncertainty and turbulence driven by the sharper ideological divide between the United States and China. PHOTO: ST FILE

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<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/singaporeans-must-put-national-interests-first-amid-external-influences-ng-eng-hen>

SINGAPORE - Singaporeans must put their own national interests first amid attempts by external forces to influence countries in the region, including Singapore, said Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen on Thursday (Aug 8).

"We want to be relevant to the world and helpful to powers, big or small, but we do not want to choose sides or be asked to choose sides,

or to be put in positions that bring short-term benefits but compromise the larger collective good," he said at the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (SCCCI's) annual National Day dinner.

Earlier in his speech, Dr Ng said Singapore and the world are entering a period of great uncertainty and turbulence driven by the sharper ideological divide between the United States and China.

He noted that during the [Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore in June](#), statements were made by then-US Acting Defence Secretary Patrick Shanahan and Chinese Defence Minister Wei Fenghe.

He also cited how the US and China have stated publicly the positions of their governments and militaries towards each other.

For instance, Dr Ng said, the US has branded China as a "revisionist power", describing it as "a strategic competitor using predatory economics to intimidate its neighbours while militarising features in the South China Sea", among others.

In response, he said, China, in its Defence White Paper, noted that "the US has severely undermined the regional strategic balance and the strategic security interests of regional countries", among others.

Speaking to the audience of about 560 people, including business leaders, Members of Parliament and diplomats, Dr Ng said these are strong and clear words from both sides.

"You as businessmen... fully appreciate what happens when top management outlines your strategy to your units - it gets translated to ground actions. Sometimes slower, other times quicker, but eventually it will filter down to the last unit," he added.

On what Singapore should do, Dr Ng said that being a small country, it should not over-estimate its ability to influence, let alone control, global affairs.

"But we must do all we can in our interactions with other world leaders to maintain an open and inclusive system which takes into account the needs of all countries, large or small, and one that does not divide our region into competing spheres of influence," he added.

In the midst of new pressures, Singaporeans must keep their own identity, independence and interests foremost in all their dealings, said Dr Ng.

On what such pressures were, he pointed to the example of Eastern Europe, where smaller countries such as the Baltic states have had to respond to external influences to divide their societies and shape their internal systems, even during elections.

"In our highly connected world, these external forces can affect countries in this region too, including Singapore. When that happens, and it will happen, we must put our own national interests first," he added.

Apart from that, Dr Ng said Singapore also has to maintain stability and security.

"We cannot help others if we ourselves are divided. If ever there was a time to strengthen our Total Defence, it would be now.

"Who is the enemy, you might ask, that we need to strengthen our Total Defence against? Of course it is not the US or China because they are close friends. We must strengthen our Total Defence against the uncertainty and impact arising from their tensions," he said.

The commemoration of Singapore's Bicentennial year serves as a reminder that the country and the region are no strangers to big-power contests, said Dr Ng, with external forces - over the past 700 years - periodically fighting proxy battles in the region, often at the expense of countries here.

"Whether it was the Srivijaya against the Chola and Majapahit (empires); the contests between the colonial powers of the Portuguese, Dutch and British; the Soviet Union and China vying for influence over Indo-China - these big-power rivalries have affected and altered the course of the countries in this region," he added.

"The US-China rivalry can have that same potential impact on Singapore and this region."

But Singapore has excellent relations with both the US and China, said Dr Ng. "And we want to keep it that way, but always based on our own national interests first, and not that of others."

He added that the Republic holds firmly to the view that the US presence in this region has contributed to stability and allowed Asia to prosper, and that it also firmly believes that the peaceful rise of China benefits the world.

He thanked the SCCCI for its support of national defence, especially for national service, from the start in 1967 when the first two batches of recruits were enlisted.

The SCCCI had given each of the recruits a medallion which had the Chinese words "jing zhong bao guo" inscribed, meaning "loyalty to the country".

The SCCCI also raised funds - about \$1.39 million - in support of national defence in 1968.

"These early efforts by the Chamber laid the foundation for a strong SAF today. And this Chamber continues to give strong support to national defence," Dr Ng said, adding that the Chamber holds an annual memorial service at the Civilian War Memorial on Feb 15 in commemoration of the civilian victims of the Japanese Occupation.

"Against fake news and disinformation campaigns on social media that seek to divide Singaporeans, the SCCCI's efforts in helping to forge a cohesive society... will become more salient than ever," he added.

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黄永宏：应对国际新压力 国人必须以国家认同与利益为出发点

黄永宏指出，新加坡与中美两国都拥有良好的关系，“但我们希望在维持我国，而不是其他人的利益为先的理念上，保持现有的状态。”

余忠达 报道
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美国和中国之间思想分歧显著，这也意味新加坡甚至全世界将进入一段更不明朗和动荡的时期。作为小国，新加坡不应高估自身影响力，更别想要掌控国际事务，而应该优先维护自身的稳定与安全。面对新的压力，国人必须以新加坡人的认同感以及国家的独立与利益为出发点。

国防部长黄永宏昨晚（8日）在新加坡中华总商会国庆晚宴致词时，作出上诉论述，分析了中美争端对新加坡的国防和整个社会带来的影响，以及新加坡应如何自处。560出席活动的人当中，有来自30多国的使节，其中包括中国使节。

美国去年7月6日开始对首批总值320亿美元（约435亿新元）的中国货征收25%关税，中国祭出多项反制措施，贸易战全面开打。虽然双方期间也举行谈判，但在某些关键问题仍有分歧。

黄永宏指出，美国和中国是世界最大的两个经济体，也拥有最庞大的军队，贸易战越演越烈

势必影响全世界，包括新加坡。在这种情况下，身为小国的新加坡如何自处非常重要。黄永宏指出，新加坡与中美两国都拥有良好的关系，“但我们希望在维持我国，而不是其他人的利益为先的理念上，保持现有的状态。”

“身为小国，新加坡不该高估自己的影响力，更不用想要掌控国际事务。这是不切实际，且骄傲自大的。我们必须竭尽所能，在与其他世界领袖交流时，维持开放和包容的体制，兼顾所有大小国家的需要，确保本区域不会被分割成多个敌对阵营。”

谈及中美关系时，黄永宏指出，两国早在多年前就存有紧张关系。自1970年代起，中国在邓小平的领导下进行经济改革，加入全球贸易体系，之后成为世界贸易组织一员。之后，中国迅速崛起，其规模和速度在历史上实属罕见。有分析指出，1890年代起成为世界最大经济体的美国，在不久的将来就会被中国超越。

“历史告知我们，当世界舞台上发生如此巨大事件时，变化必定随之而来。”



首两批新兵在1967年被征召入伍时，中华总商会赠每人一枚印有“尽忠报国”的奖章。

（新加坡中华总商会提供）

黄永宏引述哈佛大学教授格拉厄姆·艾利森2017年出版的《注定一战》（Destined for War）一书时指出，过去500年，共发生16次新兴大国崛起并挑战霸权国家的事件，其中12次引发战争。艾利森在书中提出攸关世界局势的问题：中美是否能避开“修昔底德陷阱”（Thucydides Trap），即避免两国为争夺全球主导地位而引发战争。“艾利森对问题的解答，将影响所有的国家，包括新加坡。”

黄永宏提醒，新加坡过去54年在维持我国的国际定位同时，坚决捍卫国家主权和利益的原



国防部长黄永宏（右三）在新加坡中华总商会庆祝我国54周年国庆晚宴上，同会长黄山忠（左三）、总务委员会主席白毅柏（左一起）、副会长柯文伟、副会长何乃全和副会长白连源一起主持切蛋糕仪式。（严宣融摄）

则，因此渡过了不少的艰难时期。他也特地向中华总商会为我国国防的付出致谢。

首两批新兵在1967年被征召入伍时，中华总商会赠每人一枚印有“尽忠报国”的奖章。隔年，中华总商会为国民服役和新

加坡武装部队筹集超过123万元资金。“新加坡中华总商会的这些努力，为今日的新加坡武装部队奠定了基础。”

新加坡中华总商会会长黄山忠致辞时说，建国以来，总商会一直配合国家政策，积极带领商

家推动我国的经济和社会发展。“推动总商会为华商、华社和国家不断作出贡献的正是‘华商精神’。‘诚信、效忠、回馈、创新’四大华商精神不只是总商会的传统价值观，也把总商会和国家的发展连接起来。”

黄永宏：新加坡人必须以国家认同与利益为出发应对国际新压力

订户

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文 / 余忠达



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美国和中国之间思想分歧显著，这也意味新加坡甚至全世界将进入一段更不明朗和动荡的时期。作为小国，新加坡不应高估自身影响力，更不用想要掌控国际事务，而应该优先维护自身的稳定与安全。

面对新的压力，国人必须以新加坡人的认同感以及国家的独立与利益为出发点。

国防部长黄永宏今晚（8日）在新加坡中华总商会国庆晚宴致词时，作出上诉讼述，分析了中美争端对新加坡的国防和整个社会带来的影响，以及新加坡应如何自处。560 出席活动的人当中，有来自 30 多国的使节，其中包括中国使节。

美国去年 7 月 6 日开始对第一批总值 320 亿美元（约 435 亿新元）的中国货征收 25% 关税，中国随后祭出多项反制措施，贸易战全面开打。虽然双方期间也举行谈判，但在某些关键问题仍有分歧。

黄永宏指出，美国和中国是世界上最大的两个经济体，同时也拥有最庞大的军队，贸易战越演越烈，势必影响全世界，包括新加坡。

在这种情况下，身为小国的新加坡如何自处非常重要。黄永宏指出，新加坡与中美两国都拥有良好的关系，“但我们希望在维持我国，而不是其他人的利益为先的理念上，保持现有的状态。”

“身为小国，新加坡不该高估自己的影响力，更不用想要掌控国际事务。这是不切实际，且骄傲自大的。我们必须竭尽所能，在与其他世界领袖的交流时，维持开放和包容的体制，兼顾所有大小国家的需要，确保本区域不会被分割成多个敌对阵营。”

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自 1970 年代起，中国在邓小平的领导下进行经济改革，加入全球贸易体系，之后成为世界贸易组织一员。之后，中国迅速崛起，其规模和速度在历史上实属罕见。有分析指出，1890 年代起成为世界最大经济体的美国，在不久的将来就会被中国超越。

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发布 / 2019年8月9日 3:30 AM

文 / 余忠达

来自 / 联合早报



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美国去年 7 月 6 日开始对首批总值 320 亿美元（约 435 亿新元）的中国货征收 25% 关税，中国祭出多项反制措施，贸易战全面开打。虽然双方期间也举行谈判，但在某些关键问题仍有分歧。

黄永宏指出，美国和中国是世界最大的两个经济体，也拥有最庞大的军队，贸易战越演越烈势必影响全世界，包括新加坡。在这种情况下，身为小国的新加坡如何自处非常重要。黄永宏指出，新加坡与中美两国都拥有良好的关系，“但我们希望在维持我国，而不是其他人的利益为先的理念上，保持现有的状态。”

“身为小国，新加坡不该高估自己的影响力，更不用想要掌控国际事务。这是不切实际，且骄傲自大的。我们必须竭尽所能，在与其他世界领袖交流时，维持开放和包容的体制，兼顾所有大小国家的需要，确保本区域不会被分割成多个敌对阵营。”

谈及中美关系时，黄永宏指出，两国早在多年前就存有紧张关系。自 1970 年代起，中国在邓小平的领导下进行经济改革，加入全球贸易体系，之后成为世界贸易组织一员。之后，中国迅速崛起，其规模和速度在历史上实属罕见。有分析指出，1890 年代起成为世界最大经济体的美国，在不久的将来就会被中国超越。

“历史告知我们，当世界舞台上发生如此巨大事件时，变化必定随之而来。”

黄永宏引述哈佛大学教授格拉厄姆·艾利森 2017 年出版的《注定一战》（Destined for War）一书时指出，过去 500 年，共发生 16 次新兴大国崛起并挑战霸权国家的事件，其中 12 次引发战争。艾利森在书中提出攸关世界局势的问题：中美是否能避开“修昔底德陷阱”（Thucydides Trap），即避免两国为争夺全球主导地位而引发战争。“艾利森对问题的解答，将影响所有的国家，包括新加坡。”

黄永宏提醒，新加坡过去 54 年在维持我国的国际定位同时，坚决捍卫国家主权和利益的原则，因此渡过了不少的艰难时期。他也特地向中华总商会为我国国防的付出致谢。

首两批新兵在 1967 年被征召入伍时，中华总商会赠每人一枚印有“尽忠报国”的奖章。隔年，中华总商会为国民服役和新加坡武装部队筹集超过 123 万元资金。“新加坡中华总商会的这些努力为今日的新加坡武装部队奠定了基础。”

新加坡中华总商会会长黄山忠致辞时说，建国以来，总商会一直配合国家政策，积极带领商家推动我国的经济和社会发展。“推动总商会为华商、华社和国家不断作出贡献的正是‘华商精神’。‘诚信、效忠、回馈、创新’四大华商精神不只是总商会的传统价值观，也把总商会和国家的发展连接起来。”



<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/video-on-demand/singapore-tonight/thu-8-aug-2019-11794242>

8 August 2019 (Thursday), Singapore Tonight

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