



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Minister for Defence Speaks at Opening Reception of Aspen Security Conference: DC Edition**

1. Minister for Defence Dr Ng Eng Hen spoke at the opening reception of the Aspen Security Conference: DC Edition on 7 Dec 2023 (Singapore time). The opening reception was attended by more than 100 distinguished leaders and key players in the security and defence community, including members of the US Congress, policy experts, military leaders, and US national security officials.
2. In his remarks at the opening reception, which was moderated by PBS NewsHour's foreign affairs and defense correspondent Nick Schifrin, Dr Ng discussed geopolitical developments and security challenges in the Asia-Pacific region. Dr Ng reiterated the importance of, and Singapore's longstanding support for, the US' presence in the Asia-Pacific region. He said "Singapore's founding leadership believed very much that the US presence in the Asia Pacific was critical for the stability of Asia... so when the US faced the loss of Clark and Subic, Mr Lee and the government of the day made the decision that we would offer them access to maintain a rotating presence. We renewed that MOU in 2019 with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and President Donald Trump for another 15 years, and we still continue to believe that America's presence in Asia has been a virtuous one". Dr Ng further highlighted that the historical legitimacy of the US' presence in the Asia-Pacific region was not predicated on its military might alone, and that "the greater piece was America pushing for a globalised system where all boats were lifted, small and large, and providing the instruments on an international stage, whether it was the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), or the World Trade Organization (WTO), where small states, and newly emerging countries could prosper."
3. The Aspen Security Forum is a biannual security and foreign policy conference that brings together distinguished leaders and key players in the security and defence community. The Forum has been convened annually in Colorado since 2010, and the D.C. Edition annually in Washington D.C. since 2021. Dr Ng is in Washington D.C. from 5 to 7 Dec 2023.

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