

Globalisation takes on nationalism in new world

✓ **CHONG ZI LIANG, THE STRAITS TIMES**

The world is at a turning point, with the fundamental rules of the global order set to change on a scale not seen since the end of the Cold War, Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen said.

The Cold War, which ended over 25 years ago, pitted communism against capitalism, a clash Dr Ng described as “one of the greatest conflicts of ideas in human history”.

Today, it is the rise of marginal political groups amid the shifting of long-standing international alliances, he said at a conference held at Yale-NUS College in the National University of Singapore (NUS).

“Your generation will have ringside seats to not only interesting times, but dramatic in-

terludes where the world is being reshaped,” he added.

Dr Ng was speaking at the Yale-NUS Asia Pacific Model United Nations conference. It simulates a UN session and participants debate some of today’s most pressing issues.

About 700 students from 25 countries are attending this weekend’s sessions.

Dr Ng highlighted three faultlines that will determine the outcome for the world in the coming decades: globalisation versus nationalism; global rules versus the regional order; and collective good governance versus individual rights.

“The tension at these faultlines, these competing themes, is under severe pressure. If the plates buckle, social and political tsunamis will be created



Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen. ST FILE PHOTO

and we will have to live with the changes,” he said.

The rise of populism will give greater attention to individual interests over the collective good, polarising politics, as political parties campaign on interests of different groups, hoping to win the popular vote by slim margins.

Amid these, Singaporeans have to ask themselves how the country can stay relevant and ensure good jobs remain available to citizens, Dr Ng added.

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