



SPEECH

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Remarks by First Permanent Secretary (DEFENCE), Mr Peter Ho, at the Ceremony to Welcome the Arrival of the USS Kitty Hawk at Changi Naval Base

23 Mar 2001

Good Afternoon Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Vern Clarke, Charge d'Affaires of the US Embassy in Singapore Mr Herbert Schulz, 1st Permanent Secretary of Defence Mr Peter Ho, and distinguished guests, on behalf of the Republic of Singapore Navy, I would like to welcome all of you to Singapore, and to Changi Naval Base.

The arrival of the USS Kitty Hawk and its escorts at Changi Naval Base is a significant milestone in the relationship between our two navies. The presence of the CNO at this arrival ceremony demonstrates the importance that you attach to this event. The Republic of Singapore Navy warmly receives the USS Kitty Hawk to the RSN's new naval base as our first guest.

This simple ceremony to commemorate the arrival of the first USN carrier marks the culmination of years of effort by our two governments and navies. Following the signing of the Addendum to the 1990 Memorandum of Understanding in 1998 by the then US Secretary of Defence Mr William Cohen and Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Dr Tony Tan, the two navies concluded an Implementing Arrangement last April setting out the facilities and services that would be made available to USN ships berthed here. Over the course of the past three years, COMLOGWESPAC and his staff, the Changi Naval Base Project Office and the Defence Science and Technology Agency have worked tirelessly to ensure that we are on track for today's event and I want to acknowledge the importance of their contributions.

The USN and the RSN are navies that, though significantly different in size, have in common their dedication to professionalism and the quest for the highest of standards. Over the years, we have strengthened our professional co-operation and established strong personal friendships. Our interactions through regular passexes, during the CARAT series of bilateral

exercises and multilateral exercises such as Pacific Reach 2000 have grown significantly in scope and complexity. I look forward to further expanding this long-standing relationship.

For those of us in the sea-going community, nothing quite beats the feeling of coming into port after a long period out at sea, and walking off the gangway directly onto solid ground. Only the incurably nostalgic will miss the ferry ride between Clifford Pier and the Man-of-War anchorage. Today, besides water and power being made directly available to the ships, the sailors will also be able to get direct access to 100 telephone lines at this pier. Being pier-side will also facilitate normal voyage repairs and logistical and administrative tie-ups.

Finally, I would like to extend my warmest welcome to the men and women of the Kitty Hawk Battle Group. We are pleased to host you in Changi Naval Base and Singapore. I trust that this will be a delightful experience for all and that you will have many fond memories of your time here in Singapore. And to the Commanding Officer of the USS Kitty Hawk, I would like to congratulate you in advance on the upcoming 40th anniversary of your ship.

Thank you.

News Release:

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