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Sovereignty

DEFENDING SOVEREIGNTY TODAY NEEDS INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, SAYS NAJIB

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 27 (Bernama) -- Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today that the world must acknowledge that defending sovereignty today requires much more creative and innovative approaches.

This, he said, was because sovereignty threats were now not what they seemed to be.

"It seems to me that we may not have to fight on the beaches, on the landing grounds, in the fields, and in the streets nor on the hills.

"With globalisation both in its expressed and subtle forms, we may need to prepare ourselves to defend our sovereignty on the table, and certainly with brainpower imbued with a strong sense of knowledge and moral courage," he said at a luncheon talk on "Defending Sovereignty in a Globalised World" in conjunction with the International Conference on Globalisation, here.

He said the biggest challenge facing nation states today was to deal with the latent though potent force of globalisation.

"Perhaps the frustration is that the nature of the threat is unidentifiable, amorphous, nebulous as well as hidden and as we are not alone facing this threat, the need for "unity in facing adversity" becomes critical," he said.

Najib also said that when talking about defending sovereignty within the context of globalisation, one had no choice but to go beyond military security defence.

He said today, national sovereignty was being challenged in a most surreptitious form.

Multinational institutions had become very powerful to the point of having power over sovereign nations, he said.

After all, he said, some of these institutions had bigger budgets at their disposals than many countries.

In other words, he said, nation states were indeed losing their sovereign rights to make or unmake policies and that policy options became narrower and states were losing their ability to formulate their own.

Najib also said that although Malaysia had never been seen as "a pawn in a chess game" being played out by great powers, Malaysia recognised that its security could be enhanced at the global level provided that the country managed well its relations with the great powers.

"In retrospect we have been able to balance our relations with the contending and even adversarial powers, often being seen as neutral while not necessarily formally adopting such a stance," he said.

After all, he added, declaring oneself as neutral was a policy option though this would foreclose other options.

The two-day conference organised by Finance Ministry and the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) was opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday.

-- BERNAMA

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