

29 JUN 2001

Najib-Arroyo

MALAYSIA'S ROLE IN MAINTAINING REGIONAL SECURITY APPRECIATED

BY: Abdul Aziz Harun

MANILA, June 29 (Bernama) -- The Philippines appreciates Malaysia's role in particular its efforts in maintaining and ensuring security in the region.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo conveyed this to Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak who called on her at the Malacanang place here today.

Speaking to reporters after the half an hour meeting, Najib said President Arroyo also expressed appreciation to the Malaysian government and in particular Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who had contributed greatly to the process.

She also expressed confidence that Malaysia would continue to work together with other Asean countries in ensuring prosperity and security in the region, said Najib who is on a three-day visit here.

During the meeting, Najib said he also took the opportunity to express Malaysia's stand that it would never support rebellion in the Philippines, even by the Muslim population.

He said he also told President Arroyo that he had a fruitful discussions with his Philippine counterpart Angelo Reyes on the need to foster greater cooperation between the two countries.

This would be important to the region's security and stability especially in waters along the common border, he said.

Najib said that it was agreed that operational military commanders of both sides should maintain close ties.

"This way they can exchange information and intelligence to optimise assets of both sides in their operations," he said.

On Abu Sayyaf, he said the best option for the group be to reach an agreement for peace in southern Philippines.

"This will ensure a better future for Muslim Filipinos in terms of economy and development," he said.

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