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Najib-Threat

FACE MILITARY MIGHT IF M'SIA'S SOVEREIGNTY BREACHED, SAYS NAJIB

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 2 (Bernama) -- Any attempt by any neighbouring country to violate Malaysia's sovereignty on the basis of "forward defence" will be handled by the armed forces with all its military might, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today.

He said the armed forces warned any country with the "forward defence" doctrine not to try to breach the land, air and sea sovereignty of Malaysia.

"We'll use all our military power to defend our independence and sovereignty if any country wants to implement "forward defence" or launch pre-emptive strikes.

"We're giving a clear warning," he told a media conference at his ministry.

He said the armed forces had thorough military planning if Malaysia faced threats from a neighbouring country as a result of implementing a defence doctrine that breached Malaysia's sovereignty.

"We have our plans but there is no need for me to reveal them. If we are under threat, we'll respond," said Najib, without elaborating on the plans.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday exposed the plan by certain countries which wanted to use Malaysia as their battlefield in the event of war.

The Prime Minister said these countries believed that by adopting such a strategy, they would be able to prevent the horror of war from reaching their shores.

Najib said the "forward defence" concept was not something new to the armed forces and it did not pose a threat to any country if it was only a plan.

"But if the concept is executed and violated the sovereignty of this country, then we'll take action," he said.

Asked whether Malaysia need to increase its defence budget to acquire more modern weaponry systems, he said the armed forces would buy new weapon systems if the country's financial situation permitted it.

He, however, said the situation in Malaysia had not reached a war footing stage.

"We are not in a war footing yet to the extent of postponing developments in other fields to acquire weapons for the armed forces," he said.

Asked whether Malaysia needs to change its defence policy to handle the "forward defence" threat, Najib said the armed forces defence policy and strategies suited the current situation.

Asked whether the military intelligence had received reports or information on the "forward defence" plan by a neighbouring country, he said: "Maybe there is. If the Prime Minister says so, there must be some basis to it."

To a question whether foreign spies had sneaked into Malaysia to lay out the plans to use Malaysia as a battlefield, he said the armed forces had not detected anything so far.

On criticism that the country was too soft in handling its problems with a neighbouring nation, Najib said Malaysia did not want to be involved in any conflict or war.

He also said the Royal Malaysian Navy was investigating the incident of

a navy personnel who was found in southern Philippines recently after he
fell off from a moving navy ship.

-- BERNAMA

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