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Najib-Policy

M'SIAN FOREIGN POLICY IS ENLIGHTENED, PRAGMATIC AND PRINCIPLED

PUTRAJAYA, July 10 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak told Malaysia's heads of foreign missions that the country's foreign policy is an enlightened, pragmatic and principled one.

"While the substance of our foreign policy has not changed, our approach has perhaps become more refined in this new administration," he said.

While Tun Dr Mahathir deserved much credit for raising Malaysia's international profile through his bold, insightful and often cutting views of the global political landscape, Najib believed others too could deliver the nation's views effectively to the rest of the world.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had ably demonstrated that Malaysia could disagree with her freinds and partners around the world on matters of principle, without necessarily being disagreeable.

"Advocacy of our principled position should be conducted in a manner that will allow those who are most opposed to them to be open to persuasion," Najib said at a luncheon following a dialogue session with the heads of Malaysian foreign missions at the Putrajaya Convention Centre, here today.

He also said that as a modern and progressive Muslim country, Malaysia was addressing audiences everywhere.

In his just concluded six-day visit to Italy, for instance, Najib said it was clear that the European countries had come to regard Malaysia as a role model for moderate and progressive Islam.

He said Malaysia was also becoming a vital bridge that connected the largely Christian West and Muslim East in her efforts to promote greater understanding and civilizational dialogue.

"Given that Malaysia has for centuries been at the crossroads of many religions - Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism - we can be a fine example of the tolerance and harmony that had eluded many others in the West," he said.

Najib also said that while the primary function of diplomats would continue to represent national interests to foreign governments, there was now however, a greater need to go beyond this and reach out to a very broad range of audiences at their respective host countries.

In this respect he said, public diplomacy and skilful partnership with media had become essential qualities.

"You (foreign diplomats) will need to reach out beyond the Foreign Ministry and official channels of the host government - and have the ability to communicate the entire range of our national interests and policies to a wide range of audiences," he said.

He added that TV talk shows, the charity fund raising dinners, the interviews with newspaper editors, the corporate lunches, the university appearances, the internet space - had all become important channels for projecting and representing national interests.

-- BERNAMA

RIZ AO