

Malaysia's stand on South China Sea gets support
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Malaysia's stand that security issues in the South China Sea be resolved through negotiations received the agreement of all countries attending the 11th East Asia Summit (EAS) in Vientiane, Laos, and today.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said all the countries, including China, had given their commitment to the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and the adoption of the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea in the South China Sea (COC) which would be summarised next year.

"The East Asia Summit this time gives a positive environment in our discussion on matters concerning the region as well as at the international level. Certainly, matters concerning the South China Sea will become the focus of the international community.

"This time, we see that there is a positive desire in searching for a solution to the duplication in the South China Sea," he told Malaysian journalists.

Members of the EAS are the Asean member countries, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, the United States and Russia.

The South China Sea lately had become an issue among regional and international communities sharing common interests in such developments as terrorism, extremism, maritime security as well as other security issues.

Najib said all the countries also concurred that no action should be taken that could create tension in the maritime region.

"All the countries including China had given their commitment to comply with the DOC and to work hard so that the COC could be summarised by the middle of next year," he said.

In addition, Najib said the EAS member countries had also agreed on the implementation of the CUEC (Code for Encounters at Sea in the South China Sea) and the Guidelines for Hotline Communication among Senior Officials of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Asean in the event of any emergency in the maritime region.

Najib, who led the Malaysian delegation at the meeting, said that in the intervention, he had also emphasised the issue on terrorism and the perspective on terrorism which should be tackled at source.

"Malaysia's perspective on terrorism must be viewed in terms of the comprehensive solution, not from one dimension only. Of no less importance is the feelings of the people (such as) in Syria, Iraq and Libya and several other countries which are in a state of disintegration and the question on the settlement of the Palestinian issue which does not seem to be ending," he said.

Najib said such a situation had 'fired up' the sentiments of a section of the Muslims especially the younger generation and they later did something that could not be accepted.

"Such action is something that cannot be accepted, it means that killing civilians is wrong in terms of religion. If we are to resolve the problem, we cannot look at measures such as arresting them, but at the root cause," he said.

Najib said Malaysia's concept of moderation in all matters was also emphasised by five other nations - Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Thailand and New Zealand.

Laos broke tradition when it decided to have the 28th and 29th Asean Summit Meetings, besides holding related meetings.

This is the first Asean Summit held after the creation of the Asean Community on Dec 31, 2015, and after the 'Asean 2025: Develop With (Asean Vision 2025)' is adopted, both finalised during Malaysia's chairmanship of the grouping.

At the related meetings today, the prime minister continued to lead Malaysia at the EAS meeting, Asean-India meeting and Asean-United States meeting.

- *Bernama*