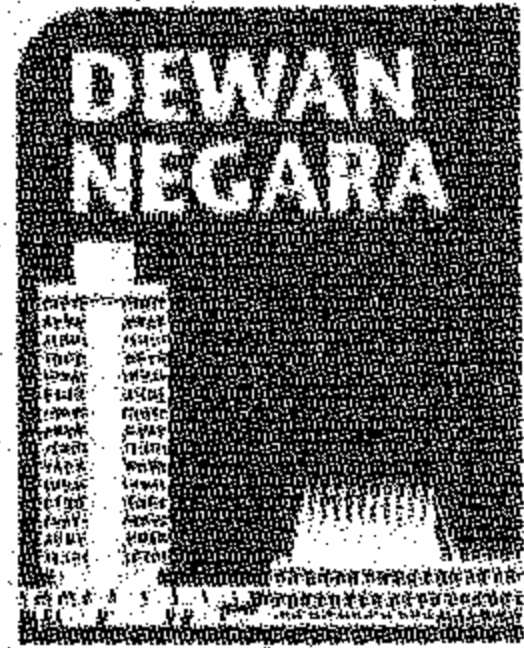


Najib: We are not in an arms race

NSI - 24/7/2007.



■ Reports by
V. Vasudevan

THE government will not compare the strength and weaponry of its armed forces with those of other countries as this could lead to an arms race in the region.

The armed forces will continue to modernise in accordance with its own requirements and will not aim to compete with other armed forces

in the region.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said although the defence capability to deal with any threat was adequate at the moment, it would continue to be enhanced in accordance with the country's financial capacity.

He assured the senators the country had the manpower to

meet its defence needs.

"The current strength does not include the volunteer corps which would assist in defending the country's sovereignty. In fact, with the current strength of our armed forces, Malaysia has been able to send its peacekeeping force to serve under the auspices of the United Nations."

To a question from Senator Datuk Rhina Bhar, Najib said the conflict in southern Thailand had to date not affected the country's security.

To a question from Chua Kim Chuan on Chinese participation in the Malaysian armed forces, Najib said the Chinese community must change its mindset on the

armed forces. He said a change in mindset would attract more Chinese youths to enlist.

Najib said representation from the Indian community was higher than the Chinese.

"The response from the Indians has been good. It is not a problem with the Indian community."