

**Najib shares security perspective**  
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*SOVEREIGNTY: Safeguarding national interests has become more challenging, says prime minister*

KUALA LUMPUR: THE defence and security of a sovereign nation depended very much on a nation's ability to protect itself, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

With networks built upon diplomatic relationships, trade agreements and defence cooperation, a sovereign nation could be rest assured that their comrades would assist in times of need.

"At a forum in 2010, we deliberated on the theme 'Emerging Regional Security Architecture'. At this forum today, this topic is extremely beneficial to the participants," he said when opening the Putrajaya Forum 2012 yesterday.

The forum is part of the ongoing Defence Services Asia (DSA) 2012 exhibition held at the Putra World Trade Centre.

"This year's theme is very appropriate and comes at a time when the current strategic environment is changing rapidly and I hope it will guide the participants in discussing the current scenarios within or outside the region."

He also said safeguarding and defending one's national interests had become more challenging in the era of globalisation.

"The defence of these interests is pivotal to a nation's sovereignty, territorial integrity and economic well-being.

"Arguably, Malay-sia's security perspective is very much influenced by the geographical, political, military and economic realities of the region and its strategic location in Southeast Asia."

Najib added that within a geographical context, Malaysia shared common land boundaries with Thailand, Brunei and Indonesia as well as maritime boundaries with these countries as well as Singapore, the Philippines, Vietnam and China.

"Malaysia is relatively small, rich in resources and located at the busiest and critical international sea lanes of communication, the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea.

"As one of the busiest waterways in the world, the straits has been attracting more than 100,000 vessels a year. This strongly influences Malaysia's security outlook in geopolitical terms.

"As a littoral state, Malaysia shoulders the responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the straits for international navigation."

Together with Indonesia and Singapore, Malaysia has worked trilaterally through the 'Eyes in the Sky' initiative to combat piracy in the straits with positive outcomes, he said.

"Likewise, the South China Sea is an important sea line of communication with a quarter of the world's traded goods passing through.

"Malaysia's commitment towards maintaining peace and stability in the disputed South China Sea through cooperation between the claimants has contributed to the stability and economic prosperity to the entire region."

He added Malaysia's exclusive economic zone, offshore interests in the South China Sea, rich in living and non-living resources like hydrocarbons, contributed significantly to Malaysia's economic development.

Malaysia's strategic aim towards military strength was to live and operate as an independent, sovereign nation within the complex world community, he said.

"Thus, we need to defend ourselves from interference and destruction through various means, including armed attack. This is the bedrock of our security and the most basic responsibility of the government."

"Physical conflicts between nations in this 21st century are no longer viable as invasion, violence and war will bring only disaster and unhappiness to people.

"Instead, we now face a new set of asymmetric and non-traditional security challenges, mainly human trafficking, terrorism, drug smuggling and nuclear proliferation which cannot be resolved in isolation or through past security means.

"We need multilateral engagements to substantially address them."

He added Asean members had instituted numerous platforms like the Asean Regional Forum, Asean Defence Ministers Meeting and the Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Counter Terrorism that had brought greater transparency for collective interests in handling sensitive issues through joint-border patrols.

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