

**Government Continues To Look After Military Personnel - Najib  
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LUMUT, Oct 18 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today described the Malaysian Armed Forces (ATM) as a very important institution and must be protected and strengthened in all dimensions and aspects.

The Prime Minister said the ATM had actually contributed much deed to the country and thus should not be neglected without being properly defended.

"The role of the ATM has been very significant, and the latest concerned the peace agreement signed between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) which led to the creation of the Bangsamoro region," he said at a meeting with Royal Malaysian Navy personnel at the RMN Base, here.

He drew attention to the agreement which had a very significant impact as it marked the end of a 40-year conflict in southern Philippine and at the same time gave the Moro people their dignity back and enabled them to have a better future.

Najib said that following this development, the southern Philippine region would enjoy peace and receive numerous development programmes.

"Thus, we need not deploy vast assets to the area (the northern and eastern Sabah waters) and this can ease the daily responsibilities carried out by the RMN," said Najib who had previously led the Defence Ministry for 14 years.

Referring to the 2013 budget tabled recently, Najib, who is also the Finance Minister, said it contained numerous incentives for military personnel.

"This shows the government's concern for the people including members of the armed forces. When we want to develop or look after the armed forces institution, we must do so in a comprehensive manner including the welfare of the military personnel," Najib said.

He also reminded the opposition not to insult nor slander the ATM such as the allegation that the Scorpene submarines could not submerge.

"When it was alleged by the opposition that the two Scorpene submarines could not submerge, it was wrong because the capabilities of (our) submarines are the best...of course when the general election is fast approaching, they make it into an issue, political capital," he said.

Najib said the decision to acquire the submarines was not made arbitrarily, but after a detailed evaluation had been carried out.

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