

**Future Of MAF And Ex-servicemen Will Be Safeguarded – Najib  
Bernama  
05 January, 2013**

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 5 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the future of the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) and ex-servicemen will be safeguarded and the continued struggle of past warriors upheld for the sake of nation building.

The prime minister said the government's endeavour to develop the country had become easier because ex-servicemen were wise by putting the government's leadership at its rightful place.

While hitting out at those on "the other side", Najib said he could not promise that the benefits and appreciation received by the armed forces and ex-servicemen would continue should there be a change of government.

"A government's struggle is definitely to build a nation that is respected and successful because the armed forces defend its independence.

"We have been successful because we put our leadership at the rightful place, whereby the leaders know how to manage the country, know the value of sacrifice of ex-servicemen, and have an agenda to develop the armed forces," he said.

Najib was speaking at the opening of the 87th PBTM delegates conference and presentation of the 1Malaysia Contribution for Veterans Without Pension (SVTB1M) at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), here, Friday night.

Also present were his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Malaysian Ex-Servicemen's Association (PBTM) president Datuk Muhammad Abdul Ghani.

The prime minister said the spirit of Harimau Malaya and Force 136, which did not wish to see authority change hands and their pledge to defend the current government should prevail although they were now ex-servicemen.

Najib also thanked ex-servicemen for their continued faith in the government, realising that the future of this country, the armed forces and PBTM could not be separated from the existing government.

"Who can guarantee our future, who can guarantee the continuation of the Royal Malay Regiment without this government?"

In this regard, the prime minister called on soldiers and PBTM members numbering more than 200,000, to renew their pledge and continue their struggle to build this nation "because now is not the time to play around or to experiment as each action makes an impact on the country".

"In the past, some of our friends were sacrificed at war. Thinking of them is one thing but what is more important is that we continue their struggle although we have become ex-servicemen," he said.

At the function, Najib presented a mock cheque for RM224 million to Ahmad Zahid who then handed it to Veterans Affairs Department (JHEV) director-general, Major General Datuk

Zulkiflee Mazlan, to symbolise the contribution of RM1,000 each to 224,000 pensionless armed forces veterans.

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