

**Be Wary Of Extremists Exploiting Technology To Recruit Terrorists - Najib  
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KUALA LUMPUR, June 1 (Bernama) -- Members of the Asia-Pacific Region must be wary of extremists, who have been adapting and exploiting technology in sophisticated ways for purposes of propaganda and recruiting terrorists, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

The prime minister said the fight against extremism must be waged in the mind, articulated in speech, and amplified in cyberspace so that the battle zones of today do not become breeding grounds for misguided ideologies to be exported abroad.

"This region has for centuries been enriched by the assimilation and integration of different peoples, cultures, and traditions.

"We must therefore proactively propagate a narrative of moderation, tolerance, and peace. This is not just a counter-narrative to the one spread by the extremists. It is in fact our heritage," he said in his keynote address at the Asia Pacific Roundtable in the capital, Monday night.

Najib said this was why technology could be the ally, and to be skillfully used to uphold the peaceful, moderate traditions which were long adopted in the Asia Pacific countries.

Najib said one of the pressing challenges for the Asia-Pacific Region was the need to consolidate regional stability and to promote positive, predictable and peaceful relations among and between nations, especially the major powers.

He said there was a need to make common cause, maximise opportunities for collaboration, and carefully manage any potential sources of tensions.

"Stability is one of those words that can mean different things to different people. Standard definition may convey a sense of permanence. We are so used to mentioning 'stability' in conjunction with words like 'preserve' and 'maintain'.

"A desire for stability could therefore be easily confused with a demand that everything remains the same, with familiarity prized and change treated with caution," he said.

Najib said the history of Asia-Pacific had shown that it had always been a region characterised by profound change.

"In recent decades the region has witnessed the most dramatic improvements in living standards in modern human history. And along with these improvements have come shifts in mind-sets and expectations," he added.

Najib said the Asia-Pacific Region need to come to terms with the rapid shifts in its strategic

environment.

"We need to realise that regional stability does not hinge on wishing away or seeking to prevent these changes. In fact, failure to properly accommodate and respond to them could create conditions that could lead to instability," said the prime minister.

Najib also said that the prospects for Asia Pacific Region also looked promising, with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific estimating 60 per cent of the world's youth between the ages of 15 and 24 residing in this region, while youth unemployment is among the lowest in the world, at 11 per cent.

"They are an incredibly spirited, vibrant, and versatile part of the nations, and they will form the future. The technological innovations of recent decades are second nature to them. These innovations have helped to transform our region and bring prosperity to our people," he said.

Touching on the 29th Asia-Pacific Roundtable (APR), Najib hoped that they would adopt a balanced and constructive approach towards issues to be discussed over the next couple of days.

"Whether as officials who make important decisions, or as scholars and journalists who deliberate on and frame the discourse on key issues, you have the ability and obligation to make a profound and lasting contribution to a positive future for the Asia-Pacific region.

"It is easy to highlight what and where the problems are. It is a lot more difficult to arrive at practical and realistic solutions. I urge you to take that difficult road, and, in the process, make a real difference to the Asia Pacific and to the world," he said.

The three-day roundtable, organised by the Institute of Strategic And International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia, which begins today, is aimed to promote trust and confidence in the Asia-Pacific region.

As a 'Track Two' forum, the APR has brought together think-tanks, academics, media representatives and senior government officials acting in their personal capacity to engage in candid dialogue regarding the major security challenges confronting the region.

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