

**Najib Highlights Critical Role of ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus
Bernama
April 18, 2016**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 18 (Bernama) -- The ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) Plus plays a critical role in balancing major power influence in the ASEAN region, allowing practical military cooperation to take place involving the middle and super powers of the world, said Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

The Prime Minister said this is very important as ASEAN, on its own, cannot guarantee peace in the region without support from friends and partners.

He said the ADMM Plus addressed regional defence and security challenges, including maritime security, counter terrorism, peace-keeping operations, humanitarian disaster and relief, military medicine, humanitarian mine actions and, soon, cyber security.

"These mechanisms will help guide us in the decades to come, long after ASEAN turns 50 next year," he said when opening the 2016 Putrajaya Forum, held in conjunction with the Defence Services Asia Exhibition and Conference 2016 here today.

The ADMM is the highest defence consultative and cooperative mechanism in ASEAN which aims to promote mutual trust and confidence through greater understanding of defence and security challenges as well as enhancement of transparency and openness.

The ADMM Plus is a platform for ASEAN and its eight dialogue partners to strengthen security and defence cooperation for peace, stability, and development in the region.

ASEAN's eight dialogue partners in the ADMM-Plus are Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and the United States.

On new security threats, Najib said there were cyber terrorists who could operate with ease across any firewall that individual countries put up as well as extremists who do not accept the legitimacy of states and could radicalise from afar.

"Stepping up inter-agency cooperation is vital. Any rivalries and squabbling over jurisdiction and turfs must belong to the past.

"There is too much at stake. In this challenging time of economic uncertainty, governments are forced to optimise the use of resources," he said.

Najib said Malaysia had adopted the National Blue Ocean Strategy which encourages inter-agency cooperation and collaboration.

The NBOS is the cooperation between the armed forces and the Royal Malaysia Police, he said.

He said that to meet the demands of defence and security challenges these days, a more comprehensive approach underscored by a spirit of openness and inclusiveness was needed.

"We must embrace the fact that defence and security are not the business of the government alone, but of all stakeholders who have common interests and goals," he said.

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