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The threat of chemical and biological warfare is ever-present and more real today, even in Southeast Asia. Given its strategic location, geographical importance and growing economic strength, this region is increasingly vulnerable to bioterrorism attacks.

Such threats can only be kept away with the close cooperation of different defence agencies and military outfits. In addition to enhancing our defence capabilities, an area that is equally crucial is intensifying our emergency preparedness and health security systems in the event of such incidents or attacks.

Following certain high-profile incidents involving biochemical attacks on our shores in recent years, Malaysia's security and defence authorities are actively taking steps to equip its personnel with the latest skills and knowledge in handling possible CBRNe (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive) threats. We in the Defence Health Services are constantly improving the competency of the relevant response teams and also to enhance interoperability between the military and civilian agencies via training and exercises.

We continue to support and participate in events like Defence Services Asia (DSA) as DSA provides the platform and opportunity to better enhance relationship with our counterparts from other countries and other local agencies as well as exposure to the latest technologies and surveillance equipments through the Battlefield Healthcare and CBRNe (chemical, biological, radioactive, nuclear, explosives) segments. DSA 2020 Battlefield Healthcare segment will stress on the importance of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), one of the key components in emergency response and preparedness.

I personally look forward to the lively and enriching discussions that will take place at the upcoming show, and the many useful new ideas and innovations that will be shared between members of the defence community in the ASEAN region.

Together with the return of NATSEC Asia 2020, I am certain that DSA 2020 will elevate the standard of health care and health services on the battlefield.

Thank you.