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SPRATLYS CLAIM MUST BE RESOLVED THROUGH DISCUSSIONS, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, 12 Nov (Bernama) -- Malaysia abides by the agreement that the issue of the Spratlys be resolved through discussions, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

+I think it will not be so, if the United States comes in,+ he told reporters' after officiating phase one and launching phase two of Genting Sanyen (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd paper mill complex here.

He was responding to question from reporters on statement made by ~~the~~ Philippine Foreign Under-Secretary Tomas Syquia in Manila yesterday.

Syquia was quoted as saying that the US would be obliged to come to the Philippines' defence if the islands Manila claimed in the disputed Spratly chain were attacked.

The Spratlys are a potentially oil-rich chain of reefs and atolls claimed wholly or part by 'China; Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei.

Foreign Ministry Datuk Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi, commenting on the same statement, said that whatever action taken by the US it should be consistent with the principles of the Asean Declaration on South China Sea signed by Asean Foreign Ministers during the recent meeting in Manila.

The declaration outlined agreement on resolving the Spratlys issue through discussions, he told reporters after receiving courtesy call from Chilean Foreign Minister Enrique Silva Cimma at his office here.

Abdullah said Malaysian hoped that other countries involved too would also observed the principles of the declaration. --Bernama

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