

15 MAY 1996

Abdullah - Cambodia

MALAYSIAN INVESTORS TO REMAIN IN CAMBODIA

KUALA LUMPUR, May 15 (Bernama) -- Malaysian investors will continue to remain in Cambodia despite reports of political instability in the country, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

The Malaysian Government would continue to support the present Cambodian leadership, he said.

Just back from a two-day visit to Cambodia, Abdullah said he had conveyed Malaysia's support for the leadership of Prince Norodom Ranaridh and Hun Sen as the country's Prime Ministers.

"I was sent there by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed, to convey the message," he told reporters at the Parliament House lobby here.

There had been reports, of late, that the political parties led by Ranaridh and Hun Sen were facing political crisis which could lead to the collapse of their present coalition government ruling the country.

According to several reports, misunderstandings by the parties led by the duo could lead to difficulty in the reconstruction of Cambodia after the civil war.

Abdullah said he met the two leaders to explain Malaysia's fear over the political developments there.

"The Prime Minister had asked me to inform them that we are supporting Cambodia, and as they are our friends Malaysia will continue to give our cooperation to the two leaders," he said.

Malaysia hoped that Cambodia would continue to be safe and stable, for the country to undergo intensive development process.

Abdullah said he also assured the two leaders that Malaysia would continue to encourage the Malaysian private sector to invest there since Malaysia was committed to Cambodia's reconstruction.

Questioned on the reaction of Ranaridh and Hun Sen to the support pledged by Malaysia, Abdullah said both the Cambodia leaders voiced out their strong belief in the ruling coalition, and stressed that they would not do anything to destabilise the political situation.

On the possibility of Malaysia withdrawing aid and her investments there if the situation deteriorated, he said: "We don't think it will come to that."

Abdullah said he also took the opportunity to have discussion with his Cambodian counterpart, Ung Huot, on the Cambodian preparation for admission as the eighth Asean member next year.

From the preparation made, Abdullah said he was convinced that Cambodia would become an active member as any other Asean partner.

"Malaysia will continue to give technical aid to Cambodia, even after it has become an Asean member," he said.

Abdullah was also asked to comment on the statement by the Japanese Centre for International Strategies Executive Director Eiichi Furukawa that Dr Mahahir had finally succeeded in setting up the East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC) after five years of being in the proposal stage.

Furukawa had said, Japan which had eluded from expressing direct support for the EAEC had finally agreed in February to attend the East Asian Ministers meeting on the economic potential and development of the Mekong Basin next month.

Abdullah said, the opposition to the EAEC was no longer as strong as it used to be since more countries had come to realise the establishment of the EAEC was not a threat to any party, but to discuss issues of common

interest.

"The cooperation that exists now will not harm or pose a problem to anyone. On the contrary, the existing cooperation will benefit all the parties," he said.--BERNAMA

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