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Ghali

US WANTS WOMAN TO BE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

By: Salmy Hashim

WASHINGTON, July 10 (Bernama) -- The United States which opposes a bid by United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali for a second term is open to the idea of a female candidate from Asia or Europe to fill the five-year position from 1997.

State Department spokesman, Nicholas Burns, said today that the United States respected UN tradition but for the first time in UN history, it was possible to look at a field of female candidates from Asia and Europe.

Boutros-Ghali's bid to seek a second term has met with strong opposition from several countries, including Malaysia. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad had said Malaysia would not support Boutros Ghali's bid for a second term because he had failed in his responsibilities to lead the world body.

Dr Mahathir said Boutros-Ghali's indecisiveness had led to many people being killed in the Bosnian war.

"We do not believe that Boutros Ghali is capable of carrying out his duties as the UN Secretary-General," the Prime Minister had said.

The UN chief's term expires on Dec 31 and he is said to be wooing support from Asian countries for his re-election.

Burns said that the US would take whatever action necessary, including using its veto in the UN Security Council to deny Boutros Ghali a second term of office.

"We don't take that step lightly. We do that because we're concerned about the future of the organisation which we believe has not succeeded in many of its primary missions over the last several years including in Bosnia," Burns said.

He also accused the UN of running a "bloated and inefficient organisation."

Boutros Ghali's unpopularity in the US is understandable. The UN chief has blamed his troubles on Washington and has urged the US to pay its delinquent dues. He has also suggested that US assessment for the UN budget be cut from 25 to 20 per cent.

Burns claimed that one out of every four dollars that went to the UN came out of the American taxpayers' pockets and thus the US had "the absolute right to speak out about the welfare of the UN, about the problems besetting the UN, and we have absolute interest to find someone else to run the organisation."--

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