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Anwar-motion

ANWAR TO TABLE MOTION OF CONFIDENCE IN MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 12 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today he will table in the Dewan Rakyat a motion of confidence in Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as Prime Minister.

The motion would be tabled at the earliest possible date during the current session of the Dewan Rakyat, said Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, at a news conference at the Treasury here.

Anwar said the Cabinet at its weekly meeting today decided that the motion be tabled.

Its tabling is for three purposes, namely:

- * to reject a draft resolution by United States congressman Robert Waxler asking Dr Mahathir to apologise or resign over his reported remarks that a Jewish conspiracy was behind the currency crisis in Southeast Asia.

(But Dr Mahathir had since clarified that he did not say there was a Jewish conspiracy behind the crisis but he had only blamed US financier George Soros -- who is Jewish -- for destroying the Malaysian economy with his speculative attacks on the ringgit and other currencies in the region.)

- * to express the full support of all members of the Malaysian Parliament for Dr Mahathir; and

- * to show the people's firm stand and solid backing for Dr Mahathir through all parties in Parliament.

Anwar said Dr Mahathir has received a letter and the draft resolution signed by 34 US congressmen dated Oct 27.

"The Cabinet does not question anybody's right to comment or give views on the statements that we made. But we regretted the tone of the letter and the draft resolution," he said.

Anwar said the Barisan Nasional (BN) supreme council would hold an emergency meeting soon to discuss the congressmen's resolution after yesterday's Umno supreme council had rejected it.

The Cabinet had instructed him to immediately write to the congressmen to explain Malaysia's stand on their resolution, Anwar said.

"We'll tell them firstly that Malaysia is a multi-racial and multi-religious country. We've never shifted from our stand from that of respecting multi-cultural co-existence.

"This has been our policy and reinforced under Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's prime ministership. As such the question of us being anti-Jews or anti-whatever race does not arise at all," he said.

Anwar said as a democracy, Malaysia upholds the practice of the people electing their leaders.

"Therefore it's illogical, rude, inappropriate and undemocratic for any country or any congressman or party to give an ultimatum that the leader of an independent and sovereign country apologise or resign," he said.

Asked whether the opposition parties would back the motion of confidence in Dr Mahathir, Anwar said he hoped all the 24 opposition members in the House would support it as this was a matter of national interest and not of party politics

"I believe that in the interest of protecting our integrity, independence, we need to give a very clear, united message to all parties including the US Congress or some members of the Congress.

"We must declare unequivocally our support to Dr Mahathir as our Prime Minister and protest strongly any attempt to interfere in the internal domestic politics of this country," he said.

On whether the government has summoned the US ambassador to convey Malaysia's firm stand on the issue, Anwar said it was unnecessary for the time being as the congressmen's move was still in the form of a draft resolution.

However, he hoped US president Bill Clinton and his administration would take a serious view of Malaysia's stand on the issue.

"As for now relations with the Clinton administration are normal. There's no impression or indication that we've taken a different attitude. This is because the congressmen's move is still a draft resolution signed only by 34 congressmen, it is still not yet a stand or statement of the US administration.

"All our ties with the US are still at normal level and we stress here that we'll continue to maintain the good diplomatic, economic or trade relations with the United States," he said.

He said Malaysia did not want the congressmen's resolution and attempt to hurt the feelings of Malaysians to affect the good relations between both countries. -- BERNAMA

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