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Parliament-Mahathir

CALL FOR MOTION OF CONFIDENCE IN DR MAHATHIR'S LEADERSHIP

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 12 (Bernama) -- The Backbenchers Club (BBC) has urged the government to table in the Dewan Rakyat a motion of confidence in Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's leadership as Prime Minister and oppose U.S. intervention in the country's affairs.

BBC President Ruhanie Ahmad said the BBC would ensure that all Members of Parliament including the opposition supported the motion.

"We want it fast...if possible during the current sitting," he told reporters at the Parliament House, here.

He said what US Congressman Robert Wexler did to sponsor a resolution calling on Dr Mahathir to apologise or resign over his purported remarks that a Jewish conspiracy was behind the currency crisis in Southeast Asia was contrary to the principles of democracy and against the sovereignty of Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir had clarified the matter, saying that he did not make such remarks and that he only blamed US currency speculator George Soros, who happened to be a Jew, for the depreciation of the ringgit.

"BBC is of the view that the action is weird and out of the ordinary because it is sponsored by a member of the law-making body of another country which purportedly fights for and upholds the principles of democracy," he said.

Ruhanie also called on the Attorney-General to use existing laws to bar and prevent probe by the US government in the involvement of Petronas in a joint venture oil and gas project in Iran.

"BBC strongly opposes the move because it is against the sovereignty of a nation and its laws. There is a need to stress here that laws approved in a country are only applicable in that country," he said.

Petronas together with Total SA from France, Gazprom from Russia, Bow Valley from Canada and Bakrie Group from Indonesia have invested more than AS\$2 billion (RM6.6 billion) in production of natural gas in South Pars, Iran.

For its involvement in the project, Petronas stands to be investigated by a team of US investigators to find out whether it has acted contrary to US law.

Ruhanie said the US action was against policy of free trade which was the US had been fighting for.

"As a trading nation, the Malaysian government has taken several measures to liberalise its economy, at times exceeding national boundary.

"It will be a sad thing if Malaysia's efforts to usaha expand its trade and investment activities in areas it has the advantage are hindered," he said. --BERNAMA

HJ ABG