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Call to table motion of confidence in Dr M's leadership

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The Barisan Nasional Backbenchers Club has called on the Government to table a confidence motion in Parliament as soon as possible to express support for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and to protest against the resolution of the 34 United States Congressmen.

Speaking at a Press conference at Parliament lobby, BBC chairman Ruhanie Ahmad hoped the Government would table the motion soon, adding that the support of all Opposition MPs would be sought.

Ruhanie made the statement hours before Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim told a Press conference that he would table a motion in the Dewan Rakyat soon in support of the Prime Minister and to condemn the draft resolution of the Congressmen and the letter which they had sent to Dr Mahathir.

He said Malaysia was an independent, free and sovereign country which practised a democratic system.

He said the proposal by the Congressmen showed unilateral personal interference in the running of a free and independent country, adding that Dr Dr Mahathir had received full support from the people in handling the current economic problems.

The Congressmen, through a draft resolution and a letter to Dr Mahathir had demanded that he make a public apology or resign for his purported anti-semitic and anti-American remarks.

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the party stood firmly behind Dr Mahathir's leadership.

The resolution followed Dr Mahathir's so-called remarks on Oct 10 that a Jewish conspiracy was behind the depreciation of the ringgit and attacks on stock markets in Southeast Asia.

Dr Mahathir had, however, clarified the following day that he did not say efforts to impede the Malaysian economy and of other Muslim countries were due to a Jewish conspiracy.

Malaysian Administrative and Diplomatic Service Association president Datuk Dr Johari Mat said the resolution not only challenged the sovereignty and rights of a nation but seemed to be very "arrogant, proud and high-handed".

"It disregards the spirit of international friendship. The association feels strongly that this sort of move must not only be stopped but should be deplored at the highest."

In Penang, the State DAP has criticised the resolution and has also expressed support for Dr Mahathir and the government in its efforts to overcome the economic problems.

Its political bureau chairman K. Balasundaram said: "The Penang DAP considers the developments relating to the resolution and a move by the US Government to investigate Petronas' business dealings in Iran as gross interference in the internal affairs of Malaysia."

He said no self-respecting country should allow such interference without the strongest protest and objection.

"It is no business of the US to force a change of political leadership in Malaysia. Whether Dr Mahathir remains as Prime Minister should be decided by Malaysians."

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