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HISHAMMUDDIN ON MALLOTT'S STATEMENT

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 20 (Bernama) -- Deputy Primary Industries Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein Onn today remarked that the recent comments made by the US ambassador to Malaysia, John Mallott, on US-Malaysia relations, were a positive step forward.

Mallott has called for both Washington and Kuala Lumpur to put a halt to the present tensions that could jeopardise bilateral relations between both nations.

This followed a move by 34 American Congressmen in asking Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to "resign or apologise" over his alleged remarks that the currency crisis in South East Asia was due to a Jewish conspiracy.

Hishammuddin, who is also the UMNO Youth vice-head, said "I feel the statement (by Mallott) is very, very responsible...it was also brave of him to make and I believe the statement was made based on his experience and knowledge about Malaysia and his understanding and experience regarding our prime minister."

"I also believe his statement of his realisation that our prime minister is one of the most tolerant, liberal and progressive Islamic leaders in the world, and I feel that this attack on us by a small portion of the American congressmen is based on a very shallow and only a bit of understanding on the true position as regards to Malaysia and our leader," Hishammuddin told a press conference after an underwriting signing ceremony for Habib Corp here.

He added that more positive efforts have got to be done on the matter.

Rhetoric as well as statements alone would not be able to resolve this issue, he said, adding that "what is needed is people to people relationship."

-- BERNAMA

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