

12 NOV 1997

Abdullah-US

MINISTERS RALLY BEHIND MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 12 (Bernama) -- The government today described the attempt by 34 United States Congressmen to table a resolution in the US House of Representatives calling on Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to apologise or resign over alleged anti-semitic remarks as "interfering with the Malaysian democratic process."

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said all members of the Cabinet voiced their support for Dr Mahathir as the country's leader and that "nobody can tell us to change our leader".

"I don't understand why they (the congressmen) should do it, this is really interfering in Malaysia's democratic process. Who are they to tell Dr Mahathir to resign," he told reporters after closing a symposium on Islam and Asia, here.

The resolution was sponsored by Congressman Robert Wexler, who is Jewish, and a Democrat from Florida.

When asked whether the Cabinet reached any decision on the issue, Abdullah said: "We discussed the issue and as far as all the ministers in the Cabinet are concerned, we support Dr Mahathir strongly as our leader and believe in his ability to lead us."

However he said, there was no formal statement on the issue.

Abdullah said the Malaysian government was democratically elected and Malaysians supported Dr Mahathir as the Prime Minister.

Dr Mahathir had clarified that he did not make anti-Jewish remarks but had merely said that currency speculator George Soros, who was coincidentally a Jew, had destroyed Malaysia's economy through his speculative attacks on the ringgit.

On the Petronas issue, Abdullah said the government had decided that it would not allow the national oil corporation to be investigated.

US officials are due here on Nov 18 to probe into Petronas's business dealings in Iran. -- BERNAMA

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