

13 NOV 1997

Mahathir-threat

REST ASSURED, M'SIANS NOT VIOLENT, PM TELLS AMERICANS

TAIPING, Nov 13 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has assured United States citizens in Malaysia not to fear for their safety.

He gave the assurance in the wake of today's announcement by the US embassy in Kuala Lumpur that it had received a telephone call threatening to kill Americans in the country.

"I don't believe Malaysians will act violently against Americans in the country," he told reporters here when approached to comment on the US embassy statement.

Dr Mahathir said US citizens in Malaysia need not feel intimidated by the threat because "Malaysians are not quarrelling with Americans."

The US embassy in Kuala Lumpur said it had received a telephone call today threatening to kill four American citizens in Malaysia.

In a statement, it said the threat to kill the Americans was one of two telephone calls it received today threatening to harm American citizens in the country.

But, it said in a statement under the heading : "Important Notice For The American Community In Malaysia", the embassy was unable to assess the credibility of the threat.

Dr Mahathir said there was no quarrel between Malaysians and Americans and he himself has several friends in the US, including Jews.

He said there was no basis whatsoever for the notion that the safety of Americans in the country was being threatened.

Such a notion would only put Malaysia in a bad light and give the impression that Malaysians were out to harm Americans, the prime minister said.

The US embassy said in the statement although it could not assess the credibility of the threat, US citizens in the country were nonetheless advised to take safety precautions.

This advice, the statement said, was in the wake of the killing of four US nationals and their Pakistani driver in Karachi and today's newspaper reports on a draft resolution against Dr Mahathir initiated by a US congressman.

Dr Mahathir also confirmed that his trip to Ottawa for an official visit to Canada, scheduled from Nov 19 to 22, has been cancelled as he is not well.

He would however still go to Vancouver to attend the summit meeting of the heads of government of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) forum scheduled for Nov 24 to 25.

Replying to a question, Dr Mahathir said he would continue to raise the currency crisis at the summit.

To another question, he said no meeting has been planned between him and US president Bill Clinton to discuss the currency crisis. -- BERNAMA

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