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Asean-Rationale

US AND EU START TO SEE THE RATIONALE OF ASEAN ADMITTING MYANMAR

KUALA LUMPUR, July 22 (Bernama) -- The United States and the European Union (EU) are beginning to appreciate Asean's decision to admit Myanmar into the grouping, presidential security advisor of the National Security Council, Philippines, Jose Almonte said today.

"The US and EU are beginning to appreciate the rationale of Asean admitting Myanmar into the grouping," he told reporters at the Second Asean Congress when asked on that nation's admission into the regional grouping.

He said the Asean decision to accept Myanmar into the grouping was a strategic rationale and was in anticipation that changes would occur in that country over time.

Myanmar and Laos will be officially admitted into Asean tomorrow at a special ceremony on the eve the 30th Asean Ministerial Meeting (AMM).

The US, EU and Japan have objected to the Asean move to induct Myanmar into the organisation.

Almonte said the human rights conditions in Myanmar would be getting worse if it did not join Asean because the government had a lot of problems either from within or outside the country.

Asked whether Asean was confident that it could bring changes to Myanmar, Almonte said Asean had successfully overcome many problems in the past and Asean members were getting more prosperous.

"When Asean was established 30 years ago, nobody thought about what we have achieved today in Malaysia and Singapore, with the other countries following closely behind...give Myanmar a chance," he added.

On Asean's future, Almonte said the regional grouping must keep building its strength to overcome any political and economic attacks from outside the region.

"I am happy with (Malaysian Prime Minister) Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement that there are political motives behind the current Baht and Peso crisis...at least the world knows that such motives exist," he said.

He said the Philippine government was quietly investigating the possibility of the existence of political motives which caused the Peso's turbulence. -- BERNAMA

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