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Parliament-Soros (WindUp)

ABDULLAH SAYS SOROS' REGRET UNACCEPTABLE

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 8 (Bernama) -- The regret expressed by international financier George Soros' for calling the ouster of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is not acceptable, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi told the Dewan Rakyat today.

"We cannot accept (his regret) because of his attitude to interfere in Malaysia's internal affairs," he said when winding up the debate on the 1999 Supply Bill for his ministry.

Abdullah said the currency speculator was actually worried over the economic recovery measures announced by Dr Mahathir which might block his chances of amassing wealth.

"It is out anger, he issued a statement recently asking Malaysians to remove Dr Mahathir," he said.

Soros told a news conference in London yesterday that he regretted calling for the ouster of Dr Mahathir because such remarks could be counter-productive.

In his speech at the John Hopkins University in the United States last week, Soros had accused Dr Mahathir of cronyism and abuse of power and that he should be removed from office.

Abdullah said Soros had stated clearly in one of his books that Malaysia could be the cause for the economic problems faced by the world today due to the country's economic recovery approaches.

"He is very worried if our approach succeeds, other countries will follow our measures and being a currency trader, he will surely be sad as his chances to become very rich is limited," he said.

Abdullah said he did not see the reasons to criticise Malaysia's economic recovery measures as the Washington-based International Monetary Fund (IMF) itself had admitted that its measures to revive the economy in West Asia had failed to yield positive results.

"If there is another formula, why not that formula be given attention rather than criticise it," he said.

"Maybe the criticisms were made with certain motives to the currency speculation and to reap profits from the Malaysian Ringgit from people like Soros," he said.

Abdullah said he always took the opportunity to explain to the international community Malaysia's rationale to implement its economic recovery measures when he attended international conferences abroad.

"Many said our measures are rational and they wished us well. If we succeed, our measures may be adopted by their countries with certain adjustments," he said.

Abdullah said he also explained the reasons leading to the arrest of former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and many were satisfied with the explanation.

He said the international community was no longer bothered about Anwar's issue except the foreign media which had its own agenda.

Replying to Dr Tan Seng Giaw (BN-Kepong), Abdullah said Soros had a well-connected currency speculators' network worldwide.

"We know he was involved in currency trading in other countries which had caused numerous problems in the countries," he said.

He said Soros behaved as though he had equal rights like Malaysians as to who should be the leader and who must be removed.

Touching on bilateral relations among Asean-member countries, he said

there was no differences among members of the regional grouping particularly during the trying times now.

-- BERNAMA

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