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Abdullah: US statement on threat is disturbing

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Malaysia is disturbed by the US statement that its embassy here faced possible attack, as happened in Kenya and Tanzania last Friday.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the statement could be misinterpreted by prospective investors, tourists or even athletes coming for the Commonwealth Games next month.

"I would like to call for caution and care when issuing such a statement, as this can be construed that Malaysia is at fault or unable to manage the security situation," he told a Press conference after he presented the Utusan Malaysia-Public Bank literary awards at the Shangri-la Hotel here today.

Abdullah issued the reminder after receiving a preliminary report on the situation following a meeting between US Embassy officials and Wisma Putra officials on security following explosions in the two African nations.

A news reports had quoted a US State Department spokesman as saying Washington had received information there might be a threat to US interests including attacks on buildings in Egypt, Yemen and Malaysia.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had commented yesterday that he did not see any reason why Malaysia should be named as one of the countries where there might be a threat to US interests.

Asked to elaborate on the State Department statement, Abdullah said if the US had a problem it should take steps to overcome it, and not issue a statement that could cause adverse reactions in Malaysia.

On a separate issue regarding the detention of three Malaysians in Myanmar he said it was difficult to sympathise with those who entered a country and broke its laws.

"It is even more difficult to be sympathetic to Malaysians who knowingly enter another country, create disturbance and break the laws of another country. They have to face the consequences," he added.

Abdullah, however, said the Malaysian Consul in Myanmar would offer assistance if needed by those detained.

On the "special relationship" between Malaysia and Singapore on Pulau Pisang issue, he said: "Malaysians employed by Keretapi Tanah Melayu Bhd also enjoy similar treatment by Singapore."

Abdullah had said yesterday that Singaporeans managing the lighthouse in Pulau Pisang (Malaysia's property) near Pontian were allowed to enter and leave the island without having to go through Immigration.

"This is the 'special relationship' which I am talking about," he said, adding that other regulations would be further liberalised if both countries continued to focus on this relationship based on historical facts, social interaction and close economic ties.

He also stressed that Malaysia had no plan at the moment to take any action on the Pulau Pisang issue.

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