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Assemblymen rap Gore, Albright

JOHOR BARU, Wed. - Johor State Assemblymen lashed out at US Vice-President Al Gore and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright for "gross interference" in Malaysia's domestic affairs.

At the State Legislative Assembly today, the members also passed a special motion expressing their loyalty and support for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Speaker Datuk Ali Hassan adjourned proceedings to allow members to respond to Gore's speech on Monday night.

Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman condemned Gore for his remarks, saying it was a deliberate attempt by the US to incite trouble in Malaysia.

He said by condoning street violence and riots, the US was encouraging people to riot. "His speech was deliberately aimed at discrediting the Malaysian Government and inciting trouble so that those backing the reformasi movement would continue with their illegal demonstrations."

US' support for the reformasi movement, he said, showed that the US was against Malaysia's democratically-elected Government and Dr Mahathir.

He said that by supporting street violence, the US was not sincere in wanting to help Asia recover from the economic crisis.

Ghani said Gore championed human rights when the US had the worst human rights record in the world, as reported by Amnesty International.

He said the Johor Government would continue to support Dr Mahathir's leadership as it believed he could lead the country out of the economic downturn.

Khatijah Mohd Som (BN-Pulai Sebatang) said Malaysian leaders should have been more forceful in expressing their displeasure at Albright when she first commented on former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's arrest.

State Housing, Small and Medium-Scale Industries and Local Government Committee chairman Adam Abdul Hamid also expressed anger and disappointment over Gore's remarks and Albright's meeting with Anwar's wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

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