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Association

M'SIA ASSOCIATION IN U.S. SUPPORTS MAHATHIR

By: Salmy Hashim

NEW YORK, Sept 15 (Bernama) -- The Malaysia Association of America on Monday pledged full support for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's decision to dismiss Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as deputy prime minister and finance minister in national interest.

The association, made up of Malaysian Chinese working and residing in New York, also expressed confidence in Dr Mahathir's stewardship to steer Malaysia out of the current economic woes.

"We fully support the measures taken by the Malaysian government in facing the current challenges and we stand solidly behind Datuk Seri (Dr Mahathir)," said association chairman K.S. Bong in a letter to the prime minister.

Bong handed over the letter to International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz who launched on Monday a seminar here on business opportunities in Malaysia.

Jointly organised by the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA) and MATRADE, the Malaysian external trade corporation, the seminar was attended by executives of United States companies from the various sectors.

Rafidah is scheduled to take the seminar to other major American cities like Chicago, Boston and Houston from tomorrow till Friday.

In a dialogue session, she explained to the businessmen and investors that Anwar's expulsion was because of a morality problem and not due to disagreement between Anwar and Dr Mahathir over political or economic matters.

"As in any country, the chief executive has the authority to hire or fire - that's his right," Rafidah said.

It was also a move that had the full support of the Malaysian Cabinet and Umno members, she said.

Rafidah said Anwar, whom she referred to as "my dear ex-student," had violated a set of values and the reason for the firing "is valid and compelling".

Anwar was one of her students when she taught at the University of Malaya.

Rafidah, who is also a member of the Umno Supreme Council, said the council had the right to dismiss Anwar from the party due to his improprieties.

"We've allowed Anwar to defend himself, we've listened to him - unfortunately we're not convinced," she said.

The council had asked Anwar to resign from his position as deputy party president and withdraw voluntarily from the party, but when he refused, council members voted unanimously to sack him, she added.

-- BERNAMA

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