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Campaign condemning US veep

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The Barisan Nasional Youth today launched a signature campaign supporting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's leadership and condemning the United States leaders' arrogance and ignorance of the actual situation in Malaysia.

The movement also handed over a protest letter to the US embassy, expressing anger and indignation over the "hypocritical, sarcastic and arrogant" remarks made by US Vice-President Al Gore at the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation Business Summit dinner on Monday.

Its acting chief, Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, called on Malaysians to go to the Putra World Trade Centre to sign a protest petition at the Barisan Nasional Youth Secretariat.

The secretariat will operate round-the-clock to attend to those wishing to sign the petition, he told a Press conference.

He said the public could also call the secretariat at 03-4419011 to voice disgust towards Gore's remarks on the exchange rate control adopted by Malaysia, and his support for the so-called "reform" movement.

They could even call the embassy at 03-2489011 to register their disgust.

Gore came under fire from Malaysians for insulting the country and interfering in its internal affairs, and was also rapped by foreign leaders attending the Apec Leaders' Meeting for his remarks.

Hishammuddin said the action followed a consensus by the Barisan Nasional Youth leaders who decided against marching to the embassy and holding a demonstration but instead, to hand over a protest letter.

"Although, we know it will be a futile exercise since Gore will not apologise or retract his remark, we felt that it will be more effective than resorting to a street protest," he said.

"The actions of Gore and US State Secretary Madeline Albright over the past few days have tarnished our image and challenged the rule of law with their hypocritical and double standards," he said.

On the setting up of the "hotline" secretariat, Hishammuddin said it followed the overwhelming calls by Malaysians, who wanted to voice their grievances at the US leadership.

Later, he led a five-member delegation to hand over the protest letter to the embassy's deputy chief of mission Anna Borg at its premises about 4.15pm.

He was accompanied by MCA Youth chief Datuk Chan Kong Choy, MIC Youth secretary-general Datuk Nelson Nathan, Gerakan Youth secretary-general Lum Weng Keong and Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak Youth chief Joseph Entulu.

Prior to leaving, Hishammuddin and the Barisan Nasional component youth leaders met about 100 supporters who waved miniature national flags while gathering at the foyer of the Umno headquarters at the Putra World Trade Centre.

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