

09 OCT 1998

Abdullah-Seat

MALAYSIA'S SECURITY COUNCIL SEAT REFLECTS WORLD CONFIDENCE IN NATION

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 9 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's election to the United Nations Security Council reflects the world's recognition of the significant role played by the country in international affairs, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

Malaysia's independent foreign policy which was based on principles was also a factor in its selection for a seat in the Security Council, he said at a news conference here.

"We thank all parties particularly the Asian group which nominated us at the outset as the sole representative from Asia for the non-permanent Security Council seat," he said.

Apart from Malaysia, Argentina, Namibia, Canada and the Netherlands would also sit in the Security Council for the 1999-2000 term. The term of the other five non-permanent members of the council, Bahrain, Brazil, Gabon, Gambia and Slovenia expires at the end of next year.

The five permanent members of the Security Council with veto powers are China, France, Russia, Britain and the United States.

Abdullah said the role and outstanding leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in securing overwhelming support for Malaysia could also not be disputed.

Malaysia obtained 174 votes out of the 176 cast and was followed by Argentina (171), Namibia (167), Canada (131) and the Netherlands (122).

He said among the issues that Malaysia would focus on were the current efforts in securing a West Asia peace agreement and the crisis in Kosovo.

On the veto powers of the five permanent members of the Security Council, Abdullah said this was a fact which had to be accepted.

He expressed confidence that in any clear and conspicuous issue these countries would not use their veto to prevent the council from exercising its peace keeping responsibilities.

On Nato's threat to use air strikes to force Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to withdraw his forces from the province of Kosovo, Abdullah said, "Our stand is that any such action should have the backing of the United Nations."

-- BERNAMA

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