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Abdullah-Embassy

MALAYSIA UPSET OVER U.S. STATEMENT ON THREAT TO EMBASSY

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 13 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is upset over the United States statement that there may be a threat to US interests in this country following the recent bombings of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the statement could be misinterpreted by others including foreign investors wishing to invest in Malaysia, tourists, and sports fans who planned to come here for the Commonwealth Games next month.

"I had reminded them (earlier) to exercise care when issuing statements so that they are not misinterpreted as though we are the ones having problems or are unable to take care of our country," he told reporters after presenting the 1997 Utusan Melayu-Public Bank Literary Award.

Abdullah said he issued the reminder as soon as he received a report on discussions on the matter between officials of his ministry and the US embassy.

Malaysia's security, he said, was always under control and the government was confident that nothing that could affect the country's stability would happen.

Abdullah was commenting on the statement by a US State Department spokeswoman that Washington had received information that there might be a threat to American interests in Egypt, Yemen and Malaysia.

He said if it was the US that was facing a problem, it should seek to resolve it and not make statements that would attract reactions adverse to Malaysia.

"Where we can help, we will help... but we don't want statements which can cause alarm, or that can be misinterpreted by Malaysians or others wishing to come to Malaysia for whatever purpose," he said.

Abdullah acknowledged that Malaysia had the responsibility to offer assistance and cooperation to foreign embassies here facing security problems.

"We are already extending such cooperation... but we are most unhappy with the statement made," he added.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad described US fears of a threat to its interests in Malaysia as baseless.

On the detention of three Malaysians by the Myanmar authorities, Abdullah said: "If they have violated that country's law and it has taken action...what can we do."

Malaysia too would take action against any foreigner who break the country's law, he said.

"Frankly it's difficult to sympathise with our people who go to other countries and create trouble or breach the law, especially if they knowingly do it and are aware that they may face problems," he said.

He added, however, that the three Malaysians -- See Chee How, Chong Kok Ywei and Ong Ju Lin -- could always approach the Malaysian embassy in Yangon for assistance.

The three were among 18 foreigners detained last Sunday for allegedly inciting unrest. They were rounded up while handing out pro-democracy leaflets in Yangon.

Asked to clarify his statement yesterday on the special relationship between Malaysia and Singapore, Abdullah said such relationship extended to Malaysians working for KTM Bhd in the republic.

Yesterday, the minister said Singaporeans working at a lighthouse in Pulau Pisang were allowed to bypass Malaysian immigration procedures because of the special relationship.

He said the relaxed procedures would continue if the two countries paid attention to the special relationship, that was based on historical facts and close social and economic ties.

"If we constantly instigate...it will affect this special relationship that was difficult to build," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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