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MALAYSIA DROPPED FROM US DRUG PRODUCER LIST

By: Salmy Hashim

WASHINGTON, Dec 8 (Bernama) -- United States president Bill Clinton Monday dropped Malaysia and Iran from its list of drug-producing countries.

In a letter to Congress, Clinton said: "This year I have removed Iran and Malaysia from the list of major drug producing countries and designated them as countries of concern.

"Although Malaysia's geographic location makes it a feasible transit route for heroin to the United States, as had been the case in the past, we have no indication that drugs significantly affecting the United States have transited the country in the past few years."

The letter from the White House may temporarily loosen bilateral tensions between the two countries following vice-president Al Gore's provocative remarks US financier George Soros' call for the ouster of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

At the APEC Leaders' Summit in Kuala Lumpur last month Gore lauded the so-called movement for reform in Malaysia while Soros' also called for the release of former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim currently on trial for corruption.

Countries still on the US drug-producing or drug-transit list include Afghanistan, the Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Myanmar, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Hong Kong, India, Laos, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Taiwan, Thailand, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

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