

19 OCT 1998

Syed Hamid-Habibie

SYED HAMID SLAMS HABIBIE, ESTRADA FOR UNWARRANTED COMMENTS

ALOR SETAR, Oct 19 (Bernama) -- Defence Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar today slammed President B.J. Habibie of Indonesia and Philippine President Joseph Estrada over their remarks on the treatment of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim since his detention on Sept 20.

"What have they to do with the political developments in this country by trying to defend Anwar," he said when closing a forum on security, economic and social threats at Wisma Darul Aman, here.

He said Malaysian leaders had never interfered in Habibie's and Estrada's ups and downs in their political careers and "I'm surprised why they are interfering in our domestic problems."

Syed Hamid also said he believed outsiders were funding activities carried out by the Malaysian People's Justice Movement Council (Gerak) to topple the government.

"Judging from their facilities to hold a nationwide campaign trail, I believe they have the financial and other support from outside," he said.

Syed Hamid, an Umno Supreme Council member, said outsiders were backing Gerak, a non-governmental organisation, in their efforts to alienate Malaysia economically, politically and regionally.

He said Gerak is being used as a tool to bring down Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is a stern and vocal leader.

"They know they cannot topple Dr Mahathir through the election process and the best way is to use Gerak to achieve their goal," he said.

He said President Saddam Hussein of Iraq also faced a similar situation when foreigners paid US\$300 million to a group of Iraqis to overthrow Saddam.

-- BERNAMA

MAN/MN TS