

14 AUG 1998  
US-Security  
US AMBASSADOR GRATEFUL FOR MALAYSIAN HELP

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 14 (Bernama) -- United States ambassador to Malaysia John R. Malott today thanked the Malaysian government for its cooperation over the issue of the embassy's security here.

"We are extremely grateful to the government of Malaysia and especially the Royal Malaysia Police for their full and total support and cooperation as we have done this.

"We could not ask for anything more," he said in a statement here.

He said the US embassy here as well as other embassies throughout the world had been directed by its State Department "to review and tighten security procedures as a result of international developments, in particular the bombings in Kenya and Tanzania."

Commander-in-Chief for the United States Pacific Fleet, Admiral Archie Clemins also lauded Malaysia's appropriate and responsive measures to safeguard the US embassy along with its other interests here, in the light of the bombings in Kenya and Tanzania last Friday.

"The government of Malaysia has been very responsive to that (measures to safeguard the US embassy here). I think appropriate action had been taken," he told reporters after giving a talk at the Maritime Institute of Malaysia here today.

More than 250 people, including 12 Americans were killed and 5,000 wounded when car bombs exploded almost simultaneously in Nairobi and the Tanzanian capital of Dar es Salaam last Friday.

The US State Department on Tuesday warned of threats to US interests in Egypt, Yemen and Malaysia saying that "this could include attacks on buildings."

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said on Wednesday he did not see any reason why Malaysia should be named as one of the countries where there might be a threat to US interests.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi also voiced concern yesterday over the US State Department's statement as it could be misinterpreted by others including foreign investors, tourists and sports fans who planned to be here for the Commonwealth Games next month.

Clemins said the US would take any threats on its citizen and interest all over the world seriously, regardless if it is true or not.

"Any of us would get a phone call tomorrow and say that the American embassy in Japan, the Philippines or US consulate in Hong Kong would be blown up. We will take action whether we have proof or not," he said.

Asked why the US State Department had singled out the embassies in Malaysia, Egypt and Yemen as possible targets, Clemins said: "The US State Department did not single that out...there was an intelligence tap that says we have information to that effect.

"Now, where that came from, I don't know but it certainly did not come from the State Department. So the State Department is taking actions based on some intelligence that was gathered. Like I said, we certainly didn't pick up Malaysia. Why would we do that. It could easily be somebody else," he said.

US embassy press officer James Warren said security at the embassy were tightened after the US embassy officials called in for more police patrol around the compound.

But he said he could not imagine "any of those things that happened at Kenya and Tanzania would occur in Malaysia".

-- BERNAMA  
RAZ MHI RM