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US Congressman: Resolution did not have majority support

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The draft resolution urging Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to tender a public apology or resign as Prime Minister of Malaysia for his alleged anti-Jewish statements represents the personal views of the United States Congressmen involved in crafting the resolution.

Bername said according to the visiting chairman of the US House of Representatives' National Security Committee Floyd Spence, the resolution did not have the support of the majority of Congressmen and merely represented the views of the 34 Congressmen involved.

"Spence merely touched on the resolution issue during his talks with the Prime Minister. They did not dwell on it at length," said Foreign Ministry Under Secretary Mohamad Arshad Hussein when briefing reporters on the talks between Dr Mahathir and Spence who headed a nine-member delegation from the US Congress. The talks were held at the Prime Minister's Department.

The US Congressmen are in Malaysia for two days as part of their Austral-Asian tour.

They will also visit Jakarta and Australia.

The 34 US Congressmen headed by Robert Wexler (Democrat-Florida), came up with a draft resolution last October.

Dr Mahathir has since said on several occasions that he was not anti-Jewish and that his statement had been misinterpreted.

Mohd Arshad said Spence (Republican-South Carolina) had informed the Prime Minister that no member of his delegation supported the resolution.

"It is purely the views of the Congressmen involved and does not reflect the views of the US Congress."

Other members of the delegation include Herbert Bateman (Republican-Virginia), Owen Pickett (Republican-Virginia), Tillie Fowler (Republican-Florida), John M. Mchugh (Democrat-Pennsylvania), Paul McHale (Democrat-Pennsylvania), Lindsey O. Graham (Republican-South Carolina), Van Hilleary (Republican-Tennessee) and John Mica (Republican-Florida). Also present was United States Ambassador to Malaysia John R. Mallott.

Mohd Arshad said the Prime Minister told the US Congressmen that Malaysia was comfortable with the present US military presence in the region.

However, any increase in the size of its military presence could give rise to concern, he had said.

"The Prime Minister also expressed Malaysia's satisfaction with the level of military co-operation with the US, particularly in implementing joint exercises"

According to Mohd Arshad, the US Congressmen were impressed with Malaysia's efforts to develop despite cutting its budget by up to 20 per cent.

In this respect, Dr Mahathir was thankful for the loyalty, solidarity and the willingness of Malaysians to sacrifice and help the Government handle the present economic situation.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said Malaysia was satisfied with the aid provided by the US Government and its armed forces to train Malaysian military personnel.

He said the US had been providing a US\$700,000 (RM2.8 million) grant each year under its International Military Education and Training programme.

He said this after meeting the 11 American Congressmen led by Spence at his office in Wisma Pertahanan.

The one-hour discussion also discussed several bilateral military issues including joint military training.

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