

23 NOV 1998
Gore-Protest
WISMA PUTRA SUMMONS U.S. AMBASSADOR

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 23 (Bernama) -- The Foreign Ministry today summoned the United States Ambassador to Malaysia John R. Malott to express Malaysia's views over the statement made by US Vice President Al Gore supporting the anti-government "reform" group.

"We reiterated Malaysia's position that Gore's speech was an incitement of lawlessness and not simply a call of democracy as claimed...", Wisma Putra Undersecretary for Americas Datuk John Tenewi Nuek told Bernama when contacted here.

Nuek said Malott was summoned to Wisma Putra at 11.30am for Malaysia's views to be expressed following Malott's statement in an interview with The Star newspaper recently concerning Gore's speech.

Gore had praised former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's supporters who have been taking to the streets as "brave" during a speech at the Apec Business Advisory Council (Abac) dinner here last Monday.

His statement was later endorsed by the White House and also received the backing of U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Gore's remarks triggered an outrage from Malaysians including political and business leaders as well as local and foreign newspapers.

The angry Malaysians blasted Gore for interfering in the internal affairs of Malaysia.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was quoted as saying that Malaysians had voiced their stand on Gore's statement because they were disappointed and humiliated by his (Gore's) disrespectful remarks.

Nuek said Malott was told that Malaysians were "shocked" by Malott's statement which appeared to question Malaysia's democratic system.

In the Nov 20 interview, Malott, when asked if the U.S. did not consider Malaysia a democratic country, had said that democracy was not simply having elections.

Malott went further in irking Malaysians by saying that "Stalin had elections (and) even Hitler had elections."

Nuek said Malaysia rejected Malott's idea that any country could say anything about another country.

"Such an idea will only lead to the law of the jungle in the relation between countries," he said.

Nuek said he also told Malott that Malaysia-US ties remained "very substantive and full of potentialities which we could further expand".

Malott had said that people would come to understand that bilateral ties were "much better than what they think it is".

"In the long-term, I have nothing but optimism for our relationship," the US ambassador was quoted as saying.

Malott, meanwhile, said that Gore's statement had been taken out of context.

He said people should be careful in reading what Gore and he (Malott) said and that people should be careful not to interpret what was said by him and Gore.

"I understand that there was a lot of emotions in this issue and I hope responsible people will keep their emotions down," he told reporters after meeting Nuek.

Malott said Gore had no intention to incite violence.

He said the US does not support violence and it did not condone violence to achieve political power.

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