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Fadzil-Asean

ASEAN REQUIRES NO FOREIGN INTERFERENCE, SAYS FADZIL

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 4 (Bernama) -- Asean member countries require no foreign interference in resolving their problems, said Deputy Defence Minister Datuk Dr Abdullah Fadzil Che Wan.

The 10-member regional grouping's posture of self-reliance would have to be maintained unless the situation was most pressing and warranted modification to such stand, he said.

"Asean itself should be accountable for problems affecting member countries," he told reporters after receiving the Thai Chief of Air Force Air Marshall Sanan Tourtip at the Defence Ministry here today.

Abdullah Fadzil cited the East Timor issue as a good example of interference by a foreign power in the internal affairs of an Asean member country.

Although he did not mention the country by name, Abdullah Fadzil was apparently referring to Australia's open criticisms of Indonesia relating to East Timor's independence from the republic.

Asean groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

On his talks with Sanan, the deputy minister said Malaysia and Thailand would resume joint air exercises and exchange of military officers upon improvement to the economy of both countries.

Abdullah Fadzil said the Malaysian and Thai armed forces would strive to enhance ties in tandem with the strengthening of diplomatic ties in line the wishes of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Thai counterpart Chuan Leekpai.

To mark Sanan's visit, the Thai air force chief received an honorary Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) wing from his Malaysian counterpart Lt Gen Datuk Seri Saruji Che Rus.

Sanan, who was appointed Thai air force chief last month, will visit Singapore tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA

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