

19 DEC 1999

Syed Hamid-Acheh

MALAYSIA PREPARED TO PLAY A ROLE IN ACHEH

KOTA TINGGI, Dec 19 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is prepared to play a role to assist in seeking a solution to the conflict in Acheh if requested by Indonesia, said Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar.

He said that Malaysia was prepared at any time to play a role based on what was required by Indonesia.

"We have an open mind. The important thing is that we want to see Indonesia return to normal...its economy revived and Indonesia's integrity as a nation defended at all times," he told reporters at his residence, here, last night.

Syed Hamid said that Indonesia was a nation significant in the Asean region and therefore, the republic's peace and well-being would contribute to harmony in the region.

"We regard Indonesia as a close neighbour and we can provide whatever they feel we can contribute to fulfil their wish and aspiration in the context of bilateral relations," he said.

The minister said that any tension or incidents in Indonesia would certainly have an impact and Malaysia would play a role as a close neighbour, as required by Indonesia.

He said that close ties existed between Malaysia and Indonesia and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad felt that Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid could promote warm ties with Malaysia.

Asked what form of assistance Malaysia could provide, Syed Hamid said: "We cannot on our own offer ourselves as intermediary or peacemaker there".

"We believe Indonesia can overcome their problems and have their own formula. If they feel Malaysia can play a role, we can do it but this will have to be discussed in detail," said Syed Hamid, who is Member of Parliament for Kota Tinggi.

It all depended on Indonesia and Malaysia could not take the initiative unless on the republic's request, he added.

-- BERNAMA

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