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Syed Hamid-Asean

MALAYSIA HAPPY WITH JUST CONCLUDED ASEAN MEETINGS

By: R.Ravichandran

BANGKOK, July 29 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is satisfied with the conduct and outcome of the series of Asean-related meetings which ended here today, which among other things have accepted several initiatives proposed by Kuala Lumpur.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said Malaysia's views and initiatives, including on the Asean Troika, Asean Regional Forum (ARF), East Asian cooperation and overlapping claims in the South China Sea had been accepted.

He said the meetings had also seen a more open approach which led to comprehensive discussions extending beyond economic, social, regional and international issues.

For example, the retreat concept had allowed ministers to discuss various sensitive issues and problems and this contributed to the success of the meetings, he said.

"We are very satisfied with the meetings held. I think everything that has been done, Malaysia has played a contributing and constructive role," he told Malaysian journalists at the end of the Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) here.

The PMC wound up the meetings which began with the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), Asean Ministerial Meeting (AMM), ARF and Asean+3 which had been held since July 24.

Asean comprises Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The ARF members are the Asean 10 and Australia, China, the European Union (EU), Canada, India, Japan, Mongolia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, South Korea, North Korea, Russia and the United States.

"Our success in getting written regulations and references on the question of Troika is something very good to avoid disputes and misunderstandings," he said.

Syed Hamid said another Malaysian effort was getting the HIV/AIDS issue included in the main agenda because of its threat to social development in the region.

On the Asean+3 comprising Asean countries and China, Japan and South Korea, Syed Hamid said the idea blossomed from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's concept of East Asian cooperation.

On the ARF, Malaysia emphasised the point that in the interests of Asean it should continue to be Asean-driven, he said.

He said a meeting to finalise the document on the Code of Conduct would be held in Dalian, China, next month.

Syed Hamid said Malaysia's stand on the South East Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) had also been consistent.

"We are always very vocal that it is not only non-proliferation, but we also talked about total treaty to ban nuclear weapons," he said.

To a question, Syed Hamid said Malaysia was not jealous with any country with regard to any issues deliberated at the Asean meetings.

"Malaysia has been constructive and contributive and the question does not arise at all. Why should it arise in the first place? If you look at some of the statements, they are referring back to Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia's initiatives)," he said.

Syed Hamid also said that Russia thanked Malaysia for the positive outcome on the Chechnya question at the recent Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

"I think although we got some different opinions sometimes, but at the same time we recognised the political and territorial integrity of Russia. This is consistent with our foreign policy," he said.

The ARF meeting and PMC were also attended by Russian Foreign Minister  
Igor S. Ivanov.

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