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Toyad: Congressmen still pro-Malaysian

THE Foreign Ministry doesn't believe that Janus Merrit Strategy's efforts to influence the American Congress to impose political and economic sanctions against Malaysia would work because many of its Congressmen are still pro-Malaysian.

Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Dr Leo Michael Toyad said this was because Malaysia had a lot of investments in the United States and the Congressmen cared too much for their constituents which had business interest here.

"It is widely known that many Americans have business interest here. To them Malaysia has potential, and do not want to miss the opportunities," he said during the debate on the 2001 Budget.

He said bilateral relations between Malaysia and America may be severed due to JMS's action which had also lobbied the latter's congressmen to demand the release of former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"We view JMS action seriously as it can affect the country's image. JMS's duty is to improve its client's image politically and economically so that the American Congress would approve resolutions which would benefit their clients.

JMS is headed by two directors, Mark J. Robertson and Scott Hoffman while Palestinian Omar Nashahibi is a researcher with JMS, who had actively organised demonstrations against Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad while he was in Chicago recently.

Toyad said reports were received saying that Anwar's supporters agreed with JMS's suggestion dated Aug 24, where JMS would organise programmes that could put political and economic pressure on Malaysia with the aim of freeing Anwar.

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