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Asean-Terrorism

ASEAN ANTI-TERRORISM MEETING PROPOSED IN MALAYSIA

SINGAPORE, Oct 11 (Bernama) -- A special Asean ministerial meeting to combat terrorism has been proposed in Malaysia next April, said Malaysian Deputy Home Affairs Minister Datuk Chor Chee Heung.

The proposal was discussed by Asean senior security officials before the third Asean Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime which began here today.

"Barring any unforeseen circumstances, we will host the meeting sometime in April," said Chor who is representing Malaysia at the transnational crime conference.

Speaking to Malaysian reporters, Chor said an expert Group meeting on terrorism was also planned in Jakarta in January.

Addressing the one-day ministerial meeting here, taking place a month after the Sept 11 terror attacks in the United States, Chor said Malaysia condemned any form of terrorism, adding that "terrorism for whatever reason and motive is unacceptable."

He also repeated a suggestion by Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for an international conference on terrorism to be held as soon as possible under the auspices of the United Nations.

Chor said Malaysia was ready to cooperate with other countries in the fight against the crime and uphold international law and order.

"Malaysia is ready to join efforts with its regional neighbours in this combat. Nonetheless, Malaysia would like to reiterate that it does not support the waging of war on any country just suspected of harbouring terrorists as innocent lives will be claimed along the war path," he said.

Chor said in light of the new modus operandi of transnational crime, there was an immediate need for governments to cooperate to be more effective in curbing and countering terrorist activities which affect the economy, security and stability of countries.

He said as terrorist groups were mobile, Malaysia, like any other country, may be used as a conduit for terrorist activities.

"For example, in 1972, the Al-Fatah Group was believed to have used Malaysia to send letter bombs to United States and Europe. And in 1995, Malaysia played its part in the detection and apprehension of Wali Amin Khan Shah, a wanted Afghan war veteran, who was a bomb expert," he said.

Outlining Malaysia's campaign against terrorism, Chor said Malaysia had embarked on a series of stringent measures and used the Internal Security Act against individuals believed linked to terrorist groups.

Malaysia had mobilised close surveillance and intelligence in monitoring the situation.

On the international front, Malaysia had ratified three international conventions relating to terrorism and civil aviation and also enacted domestic legislation to give effect to them in the form of the Aviation Offences Act 1984.

The three international conventions are the 1963 Tokyo Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft, the 1970 Hague Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation and the 1971 Montreal Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation.

The transnational crime ministerial meeting was opened by Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong who called on Asean countries to support global anti-terrorism efforts and work more closely by exchanging

information and intelligence.

He also said Asean must cooperate with the international community to tackle money laundering in the fight against terrorism.

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