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Asean-terrorism

ASEAN DECLARATION UNLIKELY TO TOUCH ON U.S. BOMBINGS

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BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Nov 3 (Bernama) -- Asean senior officials here, ahead of the seventh summit on Monday, are in deep discussions to shape up a declaration on international terrorism.

It is unlikely to incorporate call on the United States to halt bombings in Afghanistan.

"I don't think we will mention any particular country in the declaration but instead a general declaration for the common good of Asean against terrorism," said a Thai senior official.

The senior officials are finalising inputs on the draft on the Asean Declaration on Combating International Terrorism.

Host Brunei has done a blueprint on the declaration, following such a proposal earlier from the Philippines, which did not urge the US to suspend the bombings but condemned terror attacks in New York and Washington on Sept 11.

Malaysia and Indonesia have repeatedly asked the U.S. to immediately stop the bombings in Afghanistan but the Philippines and Singapore have been reserved on the matter.

The Philippines, which proposed such a declaration and came out with a draft months earlier, hopes that most of its proposals will be considered.

"Hopefully it will adopt our draft substantially," said a Filipino senior official.

Another senior official said individual Asean countries and Asean dialogue partners -- China, Japan and South Korea -- might come out with separate statements on the U.S. air strikes in Afghanistan.

Malaysia has proposed that an international conference on terrorism and the root causes of terrorism be included in the declaration. "We are pushing the two factors to be incorporated in the declaration," said a Malaysian senior official.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said that the Palestine issue and the West Asia conflict were among the root causes of terrorism.

The official also said that a proposal to have the Asean Ministers of Interior and Home Affairs meeting on transnational crime focussing on terrorism should be held in Kuala Lumpur in early next year.

The earlier proposed draft of the declaration among others constitute Asean's collective response to the United Nation's call that the international community fight all threats to international peace and security caused by terrorism.

Asean leaders and its dialogue partners will begin the two-day summit proper beginning Monday.

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

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