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Call for restraint over anthrax incident

CYBERJAYA, Tues. - While condemning the sending of biological agents like anthrax via mail and branding it as a terrible act, United States ambassador to Malaysia, Marie T. Huhtala today urged refrain from people jumping into conclusions.

Asked for her comments on the alleged antrax-tainted mail which was reportedly returned from Malaysia, Huhtala said that she could not deliberate expansively on the matter as it was still under preliminary investigations, by both the Malaysian and US authorities.

"Obviously we condemn the deliberate sending of the biological agent with the mail, but with regard to what may have happened here in Malaysia is far too early, we don't know what really happened," she said when met after attending a dialogue-cum-luncheon with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

Huhtala accompanied the American-Malaysian Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) delegation to the meeting.

The ambassador who was also asked for her views on allegations that the Malaysian Government was discreetly fanning anti-American sentiments, said that it was not the actual scenario.

"It's not my experience at all, I've been here for 18 days and I've got nothing but good co-operation from the Malaysian Government," she stated.

On reports that American businessmen were cancelling their trips to Malaysia, Huhtala said that it was not exactly the case as such cancellations were not confined to Malaysia.

"It's a general mood of caution around the world."

On the recent anti-American demonstrations outside the US embassy, Huhtala said that she was very satisfied with the level of co-operation from the Malaysian police in providing necessary protection.

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