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Syed Hamid-Letter

DR MAHATHIR SENT LETTER TO BUSH LAST FRIDAY, SAYS SYED HAMID

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 7 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad sent a letter to United States President George W. Bush last Friday to convey his views on measures to counter terrorism, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

He said that the letter was sent as a follow-up to a telephone conversation between the two leaders recently.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to hold discussions with Bush at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) summit in Shanghai on Oct 20-21, he said.

In the call made by Bush to Dr Mahathir on Oct 1, Dr Mahathir and Bush agreed to hold further discussions on the issue of international terrorism at their Shanghai meeting.

Dr Mahathir has stated that he intended to write to the US president to explain his views on the terrorism issue and Bush proposed that Dr Mahathir write to him early so that the matter could be discussed at their meeting during the Apec summit.

Syed Hamid also said that Malaysia had been shown Washington's confidential report on the investigation into the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington on Sept 11.

The report was shown to him by US ambassador-designate to Malaysia Marie Huhtala and a US embassy official here last Friday, he told reporters after launching a Sungai Pahang rafting expedition organised by the MAYC here.

Asked on Malaysia's stand on the report of the US' investigation, Syed Hamid said: "We take it that they are not taking action out of revenge...they are taking action to counter terrorism and terrorist groups that may pose threats to various countries.

The report shown to him was the same report shown to Britain and Pakistan and several other friendly countries but it could not be publicly disclosed so as not to jeopardise ongoing investigations, he said.

The minister said that the US was compiling information to prove that Osama bin Laden and the al-Qaeda group, from their statements and from events which had occurred, were the parties responsible for the attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon.

On the US' request through its embassy and its administration that Malaysia cooperate by freezing the assets and accounts of those involved in terrorism, Syed Hamid said that Malaysia would provide its cooperation in line with the laws of the country and the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

Syed Hamid said that Bank Negara had issued a directive for the freezing of accounts of those with names or similar names to the group concerned as contained in the list provided by the US.

The minister also said that Malaysia would extend humanitarian aid to Afghan refugees and hoped that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) would initiate measures to collect contributions to be channelled through the UN.

-- BERNAMA

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