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Senate-Chemical

GOVT SETS UP TASK FORCE TO HANDLE CHEMICAL WARFARE THREATS

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 10 (Bernama) -- A government special task force has been formed to deal with threats of chemical warfare, the Dewan Negara was told today.

It would share information with international intelligence agencies such as that of the United States as well as countries with expertise in biological warfare, the Deputy Home Minister Datuk Chor Chee Heung told the House during question time.

"Being constantly aware of the threats of chemical warfare and despite having no expertise in the field, the government has set up a task force to tackle such threats," he said replying to a supplementary question from Senator Datuk Dayang Mahani Ahmad Raffae.

She queried the government on preparations to face any eventuality arising from the use of chemical weapons such as anthrax.

To another supplementary question from Senator Siti Zailah Mohamed Yusof, he said the government was disappointed with certain groups capitalising on religious issues to create public anxiety.

He said irresponsible action by such elements could lead to bigger problem if left unchecked.

Siti Zailah's query was on Malaysia's stand on US military strikes against Afghanistan which she said were mounted under the pretext of fighting terrorism but brought immense sufferings to the Afghans all the same.

"The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad himself has repeatedly maintained that Malaysia is totally against terrorism irrespective of the religion and ethnic origin of the perpetrators. He has also raised the issue of terror acts against Muslims at international fora," he said.

To another question from Senator Datuk Chin Fook Weng, Chor said Malaysia hoped that the Asean convention on terrorism planned for next year would prompt the US to host a similar international forum for all countries to attend.

In this way the world could give a comprehensive definition of terrorism and terrorists, he said.

He added that the UN could organise an international meeting to discuss terrorism similar to the one held in Brazil in 1993.

-- BERNAMA

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