

04 NOV 2001

Asean-Syed Hamid

MAHATHIR WILL CONTINUE CALL ON US TO STOP BOMBINGS, SAYS SYED HAMID

By: David Chelliah

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Nov 4 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will reiterate his call to the United States to halt bombings in Afghanistan at the Seventh Asean Leaders' Summit which begins here tomorrow.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said Dr Mahathir would talk on terrorism and state Malaysia's consistent stand against the US air strikes against Aghanistan at the summit.

Briefing Malaysian journalists on his arrival for the summit here today, he said Malaysia already forwarded such a proposal to be included in the draft Asean declaration on terrorism.

"Whether it will be translated into a common Asean stand is still too early to say," he said, admitting that there was some resistance from Asean member countries on Malaysia's proposal.

He said Malaysia made the proposal because that was Malaysia's policy position against air strikes which claimed innocent lives in Aghanistan and not wiping out terrorists responsible for the Sept 11 US suicide attacks.

He said Malaysia also proposed that a United Nations-sponsored international terrorism conference be held and also to find out the root causes of terrorism.

"We will leave it to the heads of government here to decide what is Asean's common stand against US air strikes on Afghanistan and the need to have an international forum on terrorism," he said.

Syed Hamid also said that Dr Mahathir would announce a RM5.1 million training aid package for four Asean member countries -- Cambodia, Laos, Mynmar and Vietnam -- during the summit.

He said the training package, spread over a three-year period, is to develop the human resources aspect for those countries involved.

"This is our ongoing contribution to Asean. We have been giving before but others don't see it. Now we will monitor our contribution so that others in Asean can see what we have done," he added.

-- BERNAMA

DC RM