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Abdullah-Jihad

NASHARUDDIN'S JIHAD CALL INAPPROPRIATE, SAYS DPM

LANGKAWI, Oct 10 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today that it was inappropriate of PAS secretary-general Nasharuddin Mat Isa to encourage the people especially its party members to fight alongside Taliban forces in a jihad (holy war) against the United States.

"He should not have recommended it to Malaysians because we should not interfere in what's happening in Afghanistan," he told reporters after attending the weekly Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at "Rumah Kabinet" at the peak of Gunung Raya here.

He was asked to comment on the statement by Nasharuddin over the matter as reported today. In the news report, Nasharuddin was quoted to have said that PAS had declared a jihad against the US for its retaliation against Afghanistan and had given the green light to its members to fight alongside Taliban forces.

Abdullah said that Nasharuddin could have done so to seek popularity.

"We sympathised over what's happening but it does not mean that we should dispatch Malaysians to be involved in the affairs of other countries if we were to take into account the heightened civil war between the Rabbani faction and the Taliban in Afghanistan," he said.

Asked on whether the government would prevent this, Abdullah, who is Home Minister, said: "We do not know whether or not there are Malaysians who have gone on the jihad because this is a matter that we are at present not involved in because our stand is that we do not support the US action in striking against that country."

He said that the matter was not discussed at the Cabinet meeting.

"It will have no bearing to the country but many people will jump to conclusion...the important is that the government's stand is generally supported by the people," he said when asked on the implications of the call for jihad.

Abdullah said it was essential that all parties were united over the matter to promote the government's efforts for a conference to be held at the United Nations level where representatives of affected countries could be present to hold discussions as there were many issues related to terrorism.

He said that the convening of the conference was vital and that was why the government had directed the heads of its foreign mission to seek the views of the respective governments to drum up support so that they could be present at the proposed conference.

"We hope that the UN is willing to be the host of the conference," he said.

"Who are the people defined as terrorists...whether those fighting for the freedom of a country are also considered terrorists, that is another question," he said.

Abdullah said that for some, they were considered terrorists but for some others, they were considered as freedom fighters.

"What is crucial is that there are terrorists and criminals and we should understand the issues being faced by the world," he said.

The deputy prime minister said that this was happening everywhere and what happened in one country would have an effect on another and the events in the US had affected the economy.

Abdullah said that the problem of terrorism was trans-boundary as it

was not restricted to a certain country and instead requires the understanding and cooperation of governments.

"In this way, information can be shared because terrorists are everywhere and they can go anywhere, so that we will be able to keep track of their movements to take appropriate action," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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