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Syed Hamid-Indonesia

STABILITY IN INDONESIA MOST VITAL FOR WELL-BEING OF ASEAN

By: Mohd Kamel Othman

JAKARTA, May 28 (Bernama) -- Malaysia regards peace and stability in Indonesia as most essential to ensure Asean's well-being as the republic is vital to the region, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

He said that any untoward incident which occurs in Indonesia would have negative consequences on Malaysia as the republic was Malaysia's closest neighbour.

Malaysia therefore hopes that Indonesia could overcome the political situation in the republic and return to play a role as a vital component of Asean to further strengthen the regional grouping, he told Malaysian journalists covering the G15 Summit here.

The two-day Summit begins on Wednesday. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is scheduled to arrive here tomorrow.

Syed Hamid said that any Asean member country which experiences instability and disharmony would indirectly affect the other Asean member countries.

Asean groups Brunei, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Reiterating Malaysia's stand in not interfering in the internal affairs of any country, Syed Hamid said Malaysia wish to see Asean solidarity and consensus continuously preserved.

On the political situation in Indonesia, the minister said that Malaysia was definitely watching developments closely and wish to see stability restored so that Indonesia could further strengthen its economy and ensure the well-being of its people.

The political situation in Indonesia is said to be tense following the impasse between President Abdurrahman Wahid and the People's Representative Assembly (DPR).

The DPR will sit again on Wednesday for a final decision on whether or not to move a motion to impeach the president through a special session of the People's Consultative Council (MPR), the country's supreme legislature where the president and vice-president were elected.

Last Friday, Abdurrahman threatened to declare a state of emergency as a way out of the current political situation.

Syed Hamid said that Malaysia also wish to see the economic situation in Thailand and the political situation in the Philippines restored so that Asean could continue to be respected besides attracting investments.

"We must not forget that among elements to promote investment in our region are the political situation, peace and stability," he said.

Syed Hamid said that Asean was also faced with a situation where countries with a capacity to invest had an alternative based on the conducive situation in China.

"China is attracting a lot of investment. If there is any indication that our region is not an attractive place to invest in, we will not be able to attract investment to our region and this can adversely affect economic development because our (Asean) economic progress does not only depend on domestic investment but also foreign direct investment (FDI)," he said.

"As far as we are concerned, Malaysia is always praying for the political situation in Indonesia to be restored," he said.

Syed Hamid also said that Malaysia upholds the principle of "prospering

thy neighbour" which Dr Mahathir always emphasised.

"We want our neighbour to also be in a good position. When the country is in a good economic position, Asean with a total population of 500 million will have a huge potential (to attract investment)," he said.

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