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`Authorities foiled plot to harm US sailors'

PUTRAJAYA, Fri. - A plot to attack American sailors who were visiting the country was foiled due to pre-emptive measures taken by the authorities.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said the authorities had received information that such an attack was planned by a militant group when the ship called at a Malaysian port recently.

"However, our pre-emptive action prevented this from taking place," he said. But he refused to say when and how the attack was supposed to have taken place, saying this would reveal how the police did their work.

Declining to confirm if the group involved was Kumpulan Militan Malaysia, he said it was a group connected to militancy and KMM was one of those which had tried to create a situation of instability in the country.

"Its members have tried robbing banks to achieve their objectives and also to harm foreigners, but this never happened because we had taken pre-emptive action."

Syed Hamid said this at his ministry after receiving the money collected from the New Straits Times Gujarat Earthquake Fund.

According to a report, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said in an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation that a local group linked to the Taliban conspired to attack American sailors who arrived in Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir reportedly said members of the group studied in Pakistan and travelled to Afghanistan where they became involved with the ruling Taliban militia and what he called the Osama bin Laden group.

"They were indoctrinated there, and they came home planning to overthrow the Government by force of arms," Dr Mahathir had said without identifying the group.

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