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US-Support

WASHINGTON PLEASED WITH KL'S SUPPORT OVER ATTACK IN THE US

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 20 (Bernama) -- The United States is "very pleased" with the Malaysian government's statements of support since the attack on the World Trade Centre (WTC) in Manhattan and the Pentagon near Washington on Sept 11.

The US embassy's press officer, Frank Whitaker, in a brief reply to Bernama today said the US was very pleased in particular with the level of support and cooperation it had received from the police.

Whitaker was asked if the Malaysian authorities had extended full cooperation to the US over news reports that some of the alleged hijackers of the commercial jetliners that crashed into the WTC and Pentagon were seen in Malaysia.

When two of the four jetliners hijacked plunged into the WTC and the Pentagon, they left an estimated 5,600 people dead or unaccounted for in New York alone and almost 2,000 came from 64 other countries, including four from Malaysia.

Washington blames Osama bin Laden, who is being sheltered in Afghanistan by the Taliban leadership, for the Sept 11 attacks and have threatened retaliation.

Malaysian leaders, political parties and non-governmental organisations have condemned the attack.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in his message to US President George W. Bush, said he was deeply saddened and horrified by the devastating attacks.

"Consistent with our policy of opposing all forms of terrorism, Malaysia joins with other nations in condemning this horrendous act," Dr Mahathir was quoted as saying.

Malaysia has offered emergency humanitarian assistance to the US and also offered to dispatch the Special Malaysian Disaster and Rescue Team (Smart) to help the American authorities in their rescue effort.

Whitaker was also asked about the confirmation by the Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Norian Mai that some of the suspects in the Sept 11 attack had been in Malaysia.

However, Norian had said that no action was taken because at that time they were bona fide travellers.

Whitaker said: "It is standard policy that we do not comment on intelligence matters and we cannot comment at all on these reports."

Newsweek, in its Sept 24 issue, quoted sources as saying that US intelligence captured one of the suspected hijackers, Khalid al-Midhar, on a surveillance tape in Kuala Lumpur.

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