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Abdullah-Terrorism

WE DON'T ATTACH MUCH VALUE TO NEW YORK TIMES REPORT, SAYS ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 11 (Bernama) -- The government does not attach much value to a New York Times report that Malaysia is a base for terrorists who are likely targets for future American anti-terrorist actions, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

He said this was because the report in the newspaper yesterday had merely quoted an official.

"If the report is issued by the U.S. State Department or the U.S. Defence Department it will carry weight and merit attention," he said when replying to a question by Datuk Mohd Sarit Yusof in the Dewan Rakyat.

The official was quoted by The New York Times as saying that terrorists tied to the Al-Qaeda network headed by Osama bin Laden and based in the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia are among the likely targets of future covert and overt American actions.

The U.S. has named Osama as the chief suspect for the Sept 11 attacks in New York and Washington that killed over 6,000 people.

"If the report is issued by the US State Department or the US Defence Department it will carry weight and merit attention," he said in the Dewan Rakyat during Question Time.

Replying to Datuk Mohd Sarit Yusof (BN-Temerloh), he said if indeed the report was correct then they had information about this country "and hence should disclose the information to us."

"They should state which group is involved, whether Malaysians or foreigners based in Malaysia to commit terrorism," he said.

"This will enable us to help and cooperate to smash the activities of criminals or terrorists," he said.

Abdullah said Malaysia's stand on terrorism was clearly stated not only over the media but also during the recent telephone conversation between the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and US President George W. Bush.

He said the stand was clear and there was no necessity to repeat it to the United States.

Malaysia's cooperation in this matter to date had been clear and the new US Ambassador to Malaysia had thanked the government for this, Abdullah said.

"I hope that if there is anything undesirable which they (America) feel will threaten their interests here or the interests of others or that of our own government, they will not hesitate to inform us."

"So that we exchange information and take action against these terrorists," Abdullah said.

Earlier Abdullah gave a lengthy explanation on the activities of terrorists in Malaysia when replying to P.Komala Devi (BN-Kapar) and 28 other members of the House.

Abdullah said apart from the communist terrorist threat which had since been smashed, Malaysia also faced threats from several militant groups which were out to topple the government by force.

He said since 1967, no fewer than 10 underground movements had struggled through militancy or via revolution to take over the government.

They included the Tentara Sabilillah (1967), Kumpulan Rohaniah (1971), Angkatan Revolusi Islam (1974), Kumpulan Crypto (1977), Kumpulan Muhammad Nasir Ismail (1980), Kumpulan Jundullah (1987) and Al Maunah (2000).

He said all these groups had been smashed and those involved had been

detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) and under provisions of existing criminal laws.

Abdullah also explained about the Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM), those involved in this group and the criminal activities carried out by the group, which could endanger national security.

He said so far 19 members of the KMM had been arrested including an Indonesian Permanent Resident.

He said of the total, 15 had been rehabilitated under the ISA, three prosecuted in court while another died while under remand due to serious injuries suffered earlier during the robbery at the Southern Bank.

Abdullah said police were also investigating other members of the group and stepping up information to the people about extremist and militant groups and their activities which could endanger national security.

On the release of a White Paper, Abdullah said the government was studying the appropriateness of issuing a White Paper on the Al-Maunah Group, the KMM and the Kampung Medan incident.

"However at this point it is still not appropriate to issue the White Paper as the court process involving the accused persons is still on and it is feared will affect the trial process," he said.

Abdullah also rejected the claim by the Opposition Leader Datuk Fadzil Nor (PAS-Pendang) that one of the KMM members had suffered memory loss due to alleged torture during the ISA detention.

He said the government did not allow any form of torture against ISA detainees.

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