

Malaysia a **beacon** of regional stability, says US

STAR 16 APR 2002

KUALA LUMPUR: The United States has described Malaysia as a beacon of stability in the region which plays an important role in efforts to fight terrorism.

US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James A. Kelly said the US appreciated the contributions made by the Government and its people towards global efforts to eradicate terrorism.

"It is important for us to further co-operate in the matter and improve our bilateral relations," Kelly told a press conference at the US Embassy here.

He said US President George W. Bush would discuss bilateral and global issues during his scheduled meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who will be visiting Washington next month.

"There are so many things that will be discussed, especially on the improved Malay-

sian economy and bilateral relations," he said.

To another question, he said both governments were deeply concerned over the Middle East crisis and Dr Mahathir had also expressed his views on the matter to him.

Kelly said he also met United Nations Special Envoy Tan Sri Razali Ismail, who will be visiting Myanmar at the end of the month to continue his talks with the Myanmar Government.

"The United States is strongly in support of the ambassador's efforts in the country," he said.

On another matter, Kelly said the United States shared the sentiments that the appeal by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim against his sentences should be heard fairly.

Asked if Anwar was the reason bilateral relations became strained over the past few years, Kelly said the matter was not discussed during his talks with Dr Mahathir.