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Asean-Thailand

THAILAND TO JOIN PACT TO FIGHT TERRORISM

By: Muin Abdul Majid

PHNOM PENH, Nov 3 (Bernama) -- Thailand will accede to an anti-terrorism pact, which has been signed by Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Cambodia, during the 8th Asean Summit beginning here tomorrow.

Speaking to reporters on his arrival here, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said this would boost efforts by Asean member states to counter the threat of terrorism in the region.

Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines inked the Exchange of Information and Establishment of Communication Procedures in Kuala Lumpur last May. It was later acceded to by Cambodia.

The agreement, another effort to complement the Asean mechanism against terrorism and other transnational crimes, is intended to establish a framework to facilitate joint effort among the signatories to combat the threat.

Syed Hamid said Asean leaders would also issue a separate declaration highlighting the grouping's resolve to tackle the menace, especially in the light of the deadly bombing on the Indonesian resort island of Bali on Oct 12 and several bomb attacks in the Philippines.

"We feel that our serious attitude (in tackling terrorism) should be contained in a declaration on terrorism which takes into consideration our efforts in pooling resources to ensure that terrorist actions cannot be given support.

"This shows the commitment of Asean countries in the fight against terrorism," he said.

Syed Hamid also said the Asean leaders would issue statements on Iraq, the Korean peninsula crisis and West Asia problems.

Elaborating on the situation in Iraq, the minister said the matter must be approached with dialogue and multilateralism using the United Nations as a vehicle for resolving the conflict there.

Iraq is facing possible attack by the United States over accusations of possession of weapons of mass destruction.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here this afternoon for the summit, the first ever to be hosted by Asean's youngest member, Cambodia, which joined the grouping in 1999.

-- BERNAMA

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