

26 AUG 2002

Syed Hamid-Poland

MALAYSIA TO STUDY COOPERATION WITH POLAND TO COMBAT ORGANISED CRIMES

PUTRAJAYA, Aug 26 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will study the possibility of cooperating with Poland to combat organised crimes such as money laundering and terrorism.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today that his Polish counterpart, Wlodzimierz Cimoszewicz, had expressed Poland's interest to forge cooperation in that area during a meeting between them.

"They would like us to sign an agreement with them to combat organised crime. That is now under consideration by us," he told reporters after the hour-long meeting at Wisma Putra, here.

Cimoszewicz arrived here yesterday for a two-day visit. This is his second visit to the country, the first being in 1996 when he was the prime minister of the country of some 39 million people.

Syed Hamid said Poland felt that such cooperation was necessary as it feared that syndicates or mafia groups in eastern Europe might use Malaysia or spread their illegal activities to this country.

He said the Polish minister also expressed his country's interest to send its foreign ministry officers here for language training in Bahasa Malaysia.

He said bilateral trade, which currently favours Malaysia, was expected to tilt to Poland's favour once Malaysia purchased the proposed PT91 main battle tanks from Poland. Poland's trade value with Malaysia last year totalled US\$97 million.

Poland is Malaysia's largest trading partner among the central and eastern European countries.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad visited Warsaw last March, the first Malaysian prime minister to visit the country since diplomatic relations were established between the two countries 30 years ago.

Syed Hamid said Poland was also keen to sign Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) in the various areas of the defence industry.

"What is important is that Malaysia would like relations with Poland to be multi-pronged, not simply focused on defence. And I think they are quite agreeable (on that)," he said.

-- BERNAMA

RV AZZ JK