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Mahathir-Terrorist

MALAYSIA TO HAND OVER TERRORIST SUSPECT TO US IF ENOUGH PROOF

By: Salmy Hashim

NEW YORK, Feb 5 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will be forced to hand over any terrorist suspects detained in Malaysia to the United States under its extradition treaty with this country, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said here Monday.

If the US had enough proof of the person's involvement in any terrorist attacks or planning any attacks against its country, then Malaysia might be forced to turn in the criminal suspect to the US under that law if there was a case against the suspect, he said at a news conference for the Malaysian media.

"If there is not enough proof, we will not surrender the suspect to the US," he said in response to a question. Dr Mahathir is here to speak at the World Economic Forum and a Malaysian investment summit.

An FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) "secret document" obtained by Newsweek supposedly indicated that a Malaysian businessman was involved with terrorists in planning attacks against the US.

The man, identified as Yazid Sufaat, a former army captain, was alleged to have hosted a meeting of two men (who crashed a Boeing into the Pentagon, Washington) at his condo in Kuala Lumpur before they returned to the US.

Yazid was also alleged to have hired Zacarias Moussaoui, a French man, as a marketing consultant with his company, Infocus Tech, with a monthly allowance of US\$2,500.

Moussaoui, said to have received US\$35,000 from Yazid and had used the money to learn how to fly a Boeing, is being detained and awaits trial in the US.

If found guilty, Moussaoui faces the maximum death penalty.

"We are concerned, the Europeans are concerned that the US may apply its laws on other countries, which is wrong," Dr Mahathir said.

Yazid and 12 others have been detained by the Malaysian government for allegedly plotting to overthrow the government by violent means.

Members of the Kumpulan Militia Malaysia (KMM) who were arrested were found to have possession of arms and materials to make bombs.

The prime minister took the opportunity while here and at the World Economic Forum to explain about Islam, the Muslim point of view about terrorism and why certain groups of people turned to violence to further their cause.

He said he might meet President George W. Bush this year or next year to explain Malaysia's views on the subject. "If we do not meet, perhaps I will write to him."

Malaysia plans to host a conference on terrorism for member-countries of the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference) in Kuala Lumpur in April.

The meeting will hopefully unite Muslim countries in forcefully renouncing terrorism which has been increasingly linked by the western media to Islam and Muslims.

Earlier in his speech at the Asia Society here, Dr Mahathir reiterated his position that Malaysia do not need foreign help or intervention in dealing with terrorism in the country.

"We have dealt with the would-be Muslim terrorists with circumspection. The majority of people in Malaysia, Muslims and non-Muslims, support the government's action...we are capable of dealing with any eventuality."

He said the opposition PAS knew this and they were unlikely to back

violence. However, if PAS broke the law, the government would enforce the laws on them.

With Malaysia's hands-on experience in dealing with terrorism (communists), "I'm sure our approach is more likely to be successful than the brute force being applied now."

Dr Mahathir said: "Exploding bombs in public places and killing innocent people cannot be accepted. Holding civilians to ransom or as hostages cannot be accepted. Poisoning food, medicine or water supply cannot be accepted."

"These are acts of terror and anyone committing these acts must be regarded as terrorists by everyone irrespective of the causes they're fighting for, irrespective of their religion, race or creed," he said.

"And once they're defined as terrorists, it is the duty of everyone, every country to hunt them down and bring them to justice," he said.

Dr Mahathir will be visiting two technology sites here and depart for Antarctica Tuesday for a week-long working visit before taking a one-month vacation.

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