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Syed Hamid-Pakistan

PAKISTAN HAS NO QUALMS ACCEPTING M'SIA AS MEDIATOR, SAYS SYED HAMID

PUTRAJAYA, June 12 (Bernama) -- Pakistan has no problems whatsoever in accepting Malaysia as a third country to resolve its conflict with India, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

He, however, said the settlement to the conflict had not reached the stage of finding a third country to be a mediator.

He said the two countries seemed to be seeking ways for peace to resolve the conflict and many other countries were also actively playing their role to seek a settlement through negotiations.

"We are monitoring the current situation. At present, we are supporting peace efforts through negotiations. The issue of a third country does not arise now. When the need comes at an appropriate time, I will answer your question about it," he told reporters after receiving Najmuddin A. Sheikh, the special envoy of Pakistani President, at his office.

Earlier, Najmuddin met Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to hand a letter from Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf which provides detailed explanation on the tensed relations between the two neighbours from Pakistan's perspective.

Abdullah received the letter as Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is currently on a working visit to Luxembourg after his trip to the Vatican City dan Switzerland.

Syed Hamid said Najmuddin also met Singapore and Indonesian leaders for the same purpose.

He said Malaysia valued Pakistan's initiative to update the countries with the latest developments along the borders of the two nuclear powers.

He said Pakistan and India were Malaysia's good friends and as such, Malaysia would not want to see the tension between the two neighbours threaten the stability in the Southeast Asian region.

The tensed situation would affect the economic climate in this region, he added.

Meanwhile, responding to a question, Najmuddin said Pakistan had advocated from the start that the India-Pakistan problem needs a third country to act as a mediator to help resolve the situation.

"We have absolutely no problem in accepting Malaysia as the mediator. As His Excellency (Syed Hamid) has pointed out just now, Malaysia enjoys good relations with India and Pakistan, and we would have absolutely no problem in accepting Malaysia's mediatory role," he said.

Najmuddin said the letter to Dr Mahathir contains explanation to the current crisis in South Asia from Pakistan's perspective.

"I've also tried to explain to the Deputy Prime Minister the background of the situation. The tension started on Dec 13 when Pakistan was accused to be involved in the attack on Indian Parliament," he said.

He said Pakistan at that time was fully occupied with the key role in the campaign against terrorism in Afghanistan and the campaign to curb extremism in the country.

He stressed that Pakistan had immediately condemned the attack on the Indian Parliament and President Musharraf was among the first to make public statement to condemn those involved.

"Nevertheless, India chose to put a different interpretation and to use its massive military build-up at the border. About 1.1 million of their army are now stationed there with about 550 military aircraft.

Reports today indicated that their warships had retreated but their

army and air force are still there.

-- BERNAMA

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