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Envoy-Malaysia

PAKISTAN READY FOR DIALOGUE TO RESOLVE ISSUE WITH INDIA, SAYS ENVOY

By: Ahmad Fuad Yahya

KUALA LUMPUR, June 13 (Bernama) -- Pakistan is seeking Malaysia's role in ensuring a continued focus of the international community in South Asia to help India and Pakistan resolve the problem of Kashmir.

Pakistani special envoy Najmuddin A. Shaikh said the attention was needed to avoid escalation of conflict in the region.

"In the absence of such attention and the absence of sustained efforts by the international community to help India and Pakistan to resolve the problem, South Asia will continue to fester and may well become as what former US President (Bill) Clinton once described, more specifically the problem of Kashmir, as a flash point," he said in an interview with Bernama here.

Najmuddin said he had also requested Malaysia to reiterate the call made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for a de-escalation or removal of the forces from the border and for a resumption of the dialogue between India and Pakistan.

The special envoy is here to deliver a letter from Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf to Dr Mahathir, providing Pakistan's perspective on the issue.

The letter was handed over to Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi at his office in Putrajaya yesterday as the Prime Minister is on a working visit to Luxembourg.

On the role of a third party in the Kashmir conflict, the retired diplomat said Pakistan had always been in favour of a third party intervention to help India and Pakistan to resolve the issues between them in particular the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

"We have had an agreement with India signed in 1972, known as the Simla Agreement under which we said that Pakistan and India will meet, discuss and come to the final solution of Kashmir.

"Thirty years have lapsed, we have had some negotiations but none of them have been substantive or fruitful.

"So we think that the bilateral part has not proven to be successful, in fact in our past history, the two agreements that India and Pakistan have reached as a result of international mediation or international intervention," he said.

In view of these circumstances, he said Pakistan believes that the good officers mediation and facilitation by an international group or a third party, which could be the United Nations, another regional organisation or an individual country.

"With regard to Malaysia, it is a friend of both India and Pakistan, and from Pakistan's perspective, we have no objection to Malaysia playing the role of a third party and helping India and Pakistan resolve the problem," he said.

He agreed with Dr Mahathir's views that there should be a resumption of the dialogue between the two countries and that a third party intervention should only be needed if the dialogue proves unproductive bilaterally.

He said the dialogue between India and Pakistan should arrive at a solution which was in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people and acceptable to them.

Najmuddin also said that Pakistan would not object to the proposed visit by commonwealth nations in meeting Indian and Pakistani leaders to find satisfactory settlement to the problem between the two countries.

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