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Syed Hamid-Untaet

UN ADVISED TO LOOK INTO ALLEGED SHORTCOMINGS IN EAST TIMOR OPERATION

PUTRAJAYA, Jan 8 (Bernama) -- The United Nations should review matters brought up by Datuk N. Parameswaran, who has tendered his resignation as Chief-of-Staff of the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (Untaet), towards improving its operation in the former Indonesian region.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said as an employee of the UN, the Malaysian diplomat had informed his employer what he thought to be the shortcomings of a UN operation, based on his personal experience on the ground.

"I think it gives the opportunity for the UN to review all those matters that he has brought up, matters that could be useful in terms of handling situations in East Timor, so that these types of weaknesses and problems in terms of personnel management, the effectiveness of the UN when doing its work, can be overcome," he said.

He was speaking to reporters after presenting excellent service awards to 46 ministry staff here today.

Syed Hamid was asked to comment on a report carried by an English daily today about Parameswaran's resignation over what he alleged as intervention from "Untaet's higher-ups and the missions's white policy".

Parameswaran's allegations of, among others, encroachment of duties and exclusion from key policy decision-making, were contained in his letter to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Syed Hamid described him as a good ministry official and one who would not make wild accusations.

He said Parameswaran was, in fact, into the extension period of his duty in East Timor but he had decided to end it earlier. It was reported that he took on the position in January 2000.

Syed Hamid said the UN should strive to take corrective measures as the allegations were not emotional in nature but based on experience.

"It is up to the UN to take note, they should conduct whatever investigation to take corrective measures so that this kind of thing would not be repeated," he said.

To a question, the minister said the issue would not interfere with Malaysia's commitment to UN operations and activities.

On the visit by Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to Malaysia on Thursday, Syed Hamid said matters of bilateral, regional and international concern were expected to be discussed between the Japanese leader and his counterpart Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"We believe that this (the visit) comes at a very appropriate time and would enable both leaders to exchange views towards the betterment and deepening of relations between Malaysia-Japan and Asean-Japan," he said.

Syed Hamid also brushed aside the perception that relations between Malaysia and the Philippines had been adversely affected by the Nur Misuari episode.

On the contrary, he said it demonstrated the two countries enjoyed close relations and an effective cooperation.

The former governor of the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao and seven of his followers were deported to Manila yesterday after being detained by Malaysian authorities for illegal entry on Nov 24 as they fled a short-lived rebellion in southern Philippines.

-- BERNAMA

MAM AHH RYN

