

22 NOV 2002
Abdullah-Regret
US WARNING ON THREAT REGRETTABLE, SAYS ABDULLAH

KEPALA BATAS, Nov 22 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today reiterated that it is regrettable that the United States has continued to make negative statements that could adversely affect Malaysia's economy.

The Deputy Prime Minister said it appeared that the US had failed to consider the possibility that its statements could discourage people of other countries, apart from its own citizens, from investing in or visiting Malaysia.

"Malaysia is disappointed with their (US) action," he told reporters after presenting Hari Raya aid to the poor, orphans and single mothers in the Bertam state constituency here.

When provided with proof, Malaysia had always taken firm action against groups which wanted to act beyond the bounds of the law or the federal Constitution, he said.

What Malaysia had been doing was public knowledge, he said.

He said the Foreign Ministry should take the necessary steps to make a protest against the US action.

He was commenting on a US warning issued two days ago that attacks similar to the deadly Oct 12 Bali bombing could take place in other Southeast Asian countries, including Malaysia.

Abdullah also said Malaysia did not agree with the US move to build up an international coalition to attack Iraq without the approval of the United Nations.

In JOHOR BAHRU, Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Paduka Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir said western countries which had been talking about fighting terrorism should not be issuing unfounded statements on Southeast Asia.

Such baseless allegations would only serve to help spark terror activities, he told reporters after inspecting the site for the launch of the national-level Mega Sale Carnival in Jalan Wong Ah Fook.

He said Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries had been cooperating to combat all forms of terrorism.

"We also know that the terror groups' aim is to topple all governments with moderate stance and to set up extremist governments," he said.

Although terror incidents occurred every day in the US and Europe, the Malaysian government had not advised its people against visiting these countries, he said.

"We know that such things happen everywhere all the time...so there is no need to panic," he said, adding that Malaysia is one of the safest places in the world.

He hoped Europeans and Americans would not be influenced by travel advisories like the one issued by the US.

In KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia Crime Prevention Foundation vice-chairman Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye said it was grossly unfair for certain developed countries to single out Malaysia as unsafe when they had no means of substantiating their claims.

"The statement made by the US has far-reaching implications and it's totally unjustified and uncalled for and the Malaysian authorities have undertaken various measures to assure foreign visitors that Malaysia is a safe country," he said in a statement today.

He wondered what yardstick had been used to determine which country was

safe and which was unsafe as terrorists do not recognise borders.

"Our Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad pointed out recently that even the best-protected country could not guarantee that there would be no terror attack. We are dealing with invisible enemies," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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