

02 AUG 2002

US-MALAYSIA-PORT

US SEEKS JOINT INITIATIVES WITH M'SIA IN PORT SECURITY

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 2 (Bernama) -- The United States has urged the Malaysian government to ensure security at its ports to prevent any shipments of arms of mass destruction.

Visiting assistant secretary for Market Access and Compliance, U.S. Department of Commerce, William Lash III said with the trend moving towards globalisation, efforts should be taken to prevent the abuse of entry and exit points of arm shipments.

"As we lower our borders and increase transshipment trade, it is important that they are not being used against Malaysia or the U.S, by those who seek to do my people harm or your people harm," he said when met during the luncheon here today.

Earlier today, Lash made a call on the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs and also Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI).

Lash said Washington was seeking a joint initiatives to this end in view of Malaysia's strong efforts to combat terrorism.

"Malaysia is the major port for transshipment and it is very important that we join efforts to make sure that people don't take advantage of Malaysia's excellent port to ship weapon of mass destruction.

"We will work together to enhance security of our ports, while at the same time not slowing down trade, which will make this a very important joint initiatives," he added.

He said the US advocated the opening up of market and increase in market access in trade and services.

He said Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had repeatedly spoken of globalisation and its reality. President Bush's administration shared the same view as Malaysia that globalisation and development should go hand in hand.

"Like Dr Mahathir, we also believe that the capital system and free market system are very important, we are also committed towards that. Our trade policy is very pro-market and pro-trade," he added.

Asked on areas that Malaysia and U.S could collaborate in the wake of the globalisation, Lash said it was important that both parties looked at trade and services sectors that had yet to have greater market access.

"By opening trade and removing trade barriers in those sectors, we will be able to do more for developing countries, and allowing them to compete in the global market," he said.

However, he said, for Malaysia to successfully compete in the global market particularly with the emerging China market, Malaysia should further emphasised on the full implementation of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).

"You have been doing well in attracting investment, but one of the most important things is to protect your patent and copyrights. It is not only for the sake of foreign investors but also to protect the IPR for your own creative artists," he said.

He added that with better implementation of IPR, Malaysia would be able to develop its talents.

"By addressing some of these factors Malaysia's growth can continue even more, not for trade and development but also for nurturing the domestic industry," he said.

Asked on the current erratic U.S economy and performance of its equity

market and dollar, Lash said there were opportunities for further improvement.

He said the recent signing of accounting reform bill by President Bush was a move to put the US on a right track to economic recovery.

"Such developments are positive for US economy as well as for the global economy," he added.

Asked on further trade relation between both countries, Lash said he believed that it would continue to grow as the U.S economy gradually recovered

"Our relationship is so strong and it is a positive indication that further investment from the U.S in Malaysia is forthcoming," he said. --

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