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Syed Hamid-US

US UNDERSTANDS MALAYSIA'S POLITICAL TRANSITION OF POWER, SAYS SYED
HAMID

PUTRAJAYA, July 9 (Bernama) -- The United States (US) government understands Malaysia's political transition of power and will not create uncertainties for both countries to enhance bilateral relations and cooperation, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

He said the US leaders had been assured that there would be a smooth transfer of power when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad retires in October next year.

"I have assured them that the transition of power (in Malaysia) has got tradition, hierarchy and the questions of leaders were resolved amicably.

"There should not be any problem with the succession of the prime minister as well as the number two (deputy prime Minister) post and Malaysia will always fall back on the party structure and tradition, which will ensure continuous harmonisation when a new leader takes over," he said.

He told reporters this after receiving the US National Security Council's Senior Director for Asian Affairs, James Moriarty, at his office, here.

Syed Hamid said this when asked on issues discussed with Moriarty, who is also Special Assistant for Asian Affairs to US President George W. Bush, during the meeting which lasted over an hour.

Moriarty, who arrived yesterday, is on a whirlwind tour of Asean countries and Malaysia is his first stop. He will next visit Thailand and Singapore.

Syed Hamid said they also exchanged views on international and regional security and stability, cooperation in combating terrorism and issues of mutual interest to the two countries.

He said Moriarty had expressed the US government's satisfaction and happiness over Dr Mahathir's visit to Washington in May, where both countries had sealed a declaration that provides the framework for cooperation in combating international terrorism.

"They see it as a very constructive bilateral effort to collaborating in an effective and meaningful way to combat international terrorism and they also expressed satisfaction over various steps solely taken by Malaysia in combating terrorism," he said.

Syed Hamid said he also brought up the Palestinian issue that needed to be resolved and that the US should play its role in resolving the conflict and achieving political solution in West Asia.

On bilateral relations, Syed Hamid said that both countries were now enjoying closer ties and better cooperation not only in trade and the economy but also in politics, enforcement of laws and regulations and training.

"Malaysia and US have many activities that can be carried out jointly through bilateral relations. This enables us (Malaysia) to present our views on issues relating to our joint interest and international interest," he said.

Syed Hamid said the interaction between Malaysia and the US improved when leaders of the two countries visited each other.

"I think this is the type of interactions now that we are having with the US with various visits of leaders... the first being James Kelly, Assistant Secretary of State for Asia and the Pacific Affairs, then Dr Mahathir visited US and today Moriarty," he said.

During all the visits, the main issue discussed was to further deepen and enhance bilateral relations between Malaysia and the US, and what type of contribution Malaysia could give to create a region that is peaceful and stable, he said.

Syed Hamid said US Secretary of State Colin Powell is scheduled to visit Malaysia at the end of the month, before attending the Asean Regional Forum, which meets in Brunei on July 31.

"He will be making official visits to several Asean countries and we are trying to finalise the visit and Malaysia had no objections to him making an official visit to this country," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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