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Syed Hamid-Policy

MALAYSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY TO SEE AJDUSTMENTS WITH TIME- SYED HAMID

PUTRAJAYA, May 22 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's present foreign policy will continue notwithstanding a flexibility for necessary adjustments to accommodate global developments, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

He said the country's foreign policy had fundamental principles that had to be adhered to but with a flexibility to accommodate developments and situations in the world as they evolved.

"We will make the necessary re-alignment and adjustments based on our national and strategic interests, based on our principles by which we are guided."

"At the same time, trying to be pragmatic so that the we don't have inflexibility in decision making that will affect our overall long term interests," he told reporters after attending a private luncheon organised by the Association of Former Malaysian Ambassadors (AFMA) here today.

He was responding to questions on the need of re-inventing Malaysia's foreign policy.

Syed Hamid said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's recent statement that his successor would continue with the country's present foreign policy clearly indicated that well-thought out policies would continue.

"But the approach will have to change depending on the situation and circumstances as they evolve," he said.

On whether the policy towards the United States would change, he said Malaysia's foreign policy was never governed by feelings but principles and was never anti-any country and that included the US.

He said Malaysia's opposition to the US-led allied invasion of Iraq should be viewed as one of principle -- based on international law and the United Nations Charter and not because Malaysia was anti-US.

On the "reward and punishment" policy being apparently practised by the Bush Administration against countries supporting and opposing the invasion of Iraq, Syed Hamid said Malaysia saw certain actions being taken by the US as if they were meant to punish.

"These are assumptions that we made because of certain incidents. We may be wrong, but you cannot decide on a policy position just based on one incident. We have to look at other factors," he said.

Meanwhile, AFMA President Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali said the association would continue to give its input to the ministry on the country's foreign policy.

He said the 70-member association would do so whenever the need arose.

"We have from time to time got together and discussed the country's foreign policy among ourselves and provided feedback to the ministry. Of course, from time to time there is a need to review and re-invent our foreign policy," said the former Chief Secretary to the Government.

-- BERNAMA

HS AHH AAM