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Mahathir-Indonesia

MALAYSIA, INDONESIA PLEDGE TO COOPERATE AGAINST TERRORISM

By: Jckson Sawatan

KUCHING, Aug 28 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Indonesia have pledged to strengthen cooperation by sharing information and intelligence in the fight against terrorism.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Indonesian President Megawati Soekarnoputri at their annual summit here also discussed measures that their countries should take against the threat of terrorism.

"Ya, we discussed peace and security," the Prime Minister said at a joint news conference with the President at the end of their Kuching summit.

Replying to a question as to what specific measures against terrorism they discussed at their nearly two hours of talks, Dr Mahathir said it was about stepping up cooperation in the exchange of information.

President Megawati, meanwhile, said such close cooperation was vital as terrorism "can be perpetrated by anyone, anywhere at anytime."

On the suggestion that Indonesia was not doing enough to check terrorism, Megawati said terrorist activities were not confined to Indonesia but occurred in other countries as well.

"There have been bombing incidents in several countries...what we should consider now is how far are we in the effort to handle this problem," she said.

The President said it would be difficult for countries to fight terrorism on their own and hence Indonesia would propose the setting up of the "Asean Security Community Council" (ASCC) at the upcoming Asean Summit in October in Bali.

"We need a mechanism such as the (ASCC) to effect concrete cooperation in the handling of the terrorism problem," she said.

On illegal immigrants, which was also in the summit agenda, Dr Mahathir said there were still many measures that both countries had to implement.

On the annual Malaysia-Indonesia consultations, Dr Mahathir said this had strengthened bilateral cooperation.

"There are no big problems between Malaysia and Indonesia and it has been found that it is quite easy for both countries to cooperate in all fields.

"If there are problems we resolve them through consultations. As for Malaysia, we are very satisfied with the discussions and have agreed that this should form part of the traditional bilateral cooperation," he said.

Megawati said even though the consultations had been termed annual, both countries could meet at anytime if there were important matters for discussion.

Indonesia will host the annual bilateral summit next year.

-- BERNAMA

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