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Syed Hamid-unity

PEOPLE'S UNITY STRONGEST DEFENCE AGAINST EXTERNAL THREAT, SAYS SYED HAMID

KOTA BAHARU, April 18 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has been successful in overcoming external threat because its people of various races are strongly united, said Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar.

"This is the key to our strength. The world will have no respect for us if we are disunited," he told reporters here today.

He said such spirit among the people had encouraged Malaysia to make known its view in the international arena even under threat of pressure from others.

As such, Syed Hamid said the people should not treat lightly the issue of unity as the collapse of many countries shown that their people were not united.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had always stressed the importance of safeguarding national interest.

He said it was for this reason that the country leaders were always reminded on the need to ensure that the people remained united, that there was no disorder in the country and that the country's economy could be mobilised.

"We were also told not to depend only on one country. We must diversify our markets...and make trade with various countries so that no one could impose their will on us," he said.

Syed Hamid said the recent accusation that several senior Iraqi officials who fled Baghdad were in Malaysia was designed to put the country in bad light.

"They make accusations to erode confidence people have in us. I believe this will go on as long as we hold firm to our principles," he said.

He also took PAS to task for trying to gain political mileage on the issue of Iraq, by denying the role played by the government in defence of the people of Iraq and to avert war.

He said it was as though PAS was playing into the enemy's hands when it tried to weaken the Muslims' political power in the country.

"That is why I hope that what is happening in Iraq will serve as a wake-up call to us.

"And in the next general election, we return Kelantan and Terengganu to the Barisan Nasional (BN) for the good of the people and our country," he said.

Earlier, Syed Hamid opened a one-day forum on human rights organised by the Malaysian Muslim Women Consultative Council and Kelantan Umno for some 400 participants.

-- BERNAMA

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