

01 DEC 2003

Syed Hamid - EU

SYED HAMID: EUROPE-ASIA COLLABORATION NEEDED TO SEEK SOLUTION FOR IRAQ

PUTRAJAYA, Dec 1 (Bernama) -- Malaysia today called on the European Union (EU) to give an assurance that it will collaborate closely with other Asian countries in seeking a peaceful solution to the Iraq crisis.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said it was time now for Europe and Asia to work together to help restrain the tendency towards unilateralism in dealing with problems confronting Iraq.

"We need to work hard (together) to find ultimate solutions to bring peace and democracy to Iraq and its people," said Syed Hamid.

He was confident that every country, including the Brussels-based 15-member States of the EU, could contribute effectively in finding long-term solutions for the good of Iraq.

"All this needs collaboration among the countries (including the EU). It needs cooperation," the Minister said when attending a luncheon-cum-discussion session with the EU Ambassadors, led by the Italian Ambassador to Malaysia, Anacleto Felicani.

Syed Hamid also said that a single country, no matter how big and powerful, would not be able to find the correct approach on its own to deal with underlying problems, like the killings in Iraq.

"It is the same when we fight terrorism. No single country, no matter how powerful, will be able to find the correct approach (over Iraq) unless we work together," he said

He added that as it was the duty of every country to work towards international peace and security, they must also be committed to find a way out for Iraq so that the world could enjoy peace and security.

On the situation in Iraq, he said, "The war is over but peace has yet to be won."

The Minister said he told Felicani about Malaysia's stand that the United Nations should play the central role in the rebuilding of Iraq and help in putting in place a fully democratic Government.

In reviewing the current political and economic relations between Malaysia and the EU, he said it continued to prosper in a spirit of goodwill and understanding.

He also exchanged views with Felicani on the recent change of Premiership from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"There is no change of Government, the party (in power) is the same, there is only a change of leadership," Syed Hamid said.

However, he said, there was bound to be a change of leadership style with Abdullah now at the helm.

"Every new individual who takes over the leadership will have his own way of doing things and his own style. (But) the policies remain the same," he said.

-- BERNAMA
RIZ RIZ SRI