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APPF-US

US DELEGATE TO APPF DEFENDS US STANCE ON IRAQ

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 13 (Bernama) -- The leader of the United States' delegation to the 11th Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) meeting here said today that he never thought that the US is practising "double standards" in its policy over Iraq.

Amo Houghton, a member of the US House of Representatives, said that the US was merely trying to protect the nation's safety by doing things which it felt were the best under the circumstances.

"We don't want to do anything pre-emptive, but we want to protect ourselves and also a lot of our friends should Iraq have the destructive weapons over there," he said when met by reporters.

He was asked to elaborate on the US plan to strike Iraq over its accusation that the country has weapons of mass destruction, which some Muslim countries felt is a double standard policy practised by the US.

Houghton said that as far as Iraq was concerned, the US was working closely with the United Nations as they did in the 'Desert Storm' operation.

He said that as the UN involvement was seen as not very effective in the 'Desert Storm' operation a few years ago, US President George W. Bush had called for harder steps be taken this time.

"We thought about it, and finally I think President Bush said that we've got to do something harder this year. That's why he did what he did," said Houghton over the US' close cooperation with the UN.

He said that the US government had decided to work closely with the UN rather than going on a pre-emptive strike on its own.

He added that following the cooperation with the UN, he believed that there would be a good resolution to the Iraqi conflict.

The three-day APPF meeting, opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today, is attended by over 150 lawmakers from 27 member countries.

-- BERNAMA

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