

Malaysia Always Consistent And Firm On Nuclear Issues

Bernama

March 26, 2012

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SEOUL, March 26 (Bernama) -- Malaysia, despite not possessing nuclear weapons or nuclear plants, is an active voice on global nuclear issues with affirmative and consistent views.

Such views are without fear or favour, advocating a world free from nuclear weapons and that development of nuclear energy was only for peaceful purposes.

Due to this, Malaysia were invited to the first Nuclear Security Summit in Washington (2010) and now once again participating in the two-day summit in Seoul that brings together 53 world leaders including Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, US President Barack Obama and United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Concerning nuclear weapons, Kuala Lumpur's long standing position is crystal clear and consistent -- that complete and total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only solution against the possible use or threat of the nuclear weapons.

On the regional level, the long standing stand and efforts of Malaysia had been on ensuring that Southeast Asia must be a nuclear-free zone, a position well respected by many countries and Malaysia is also a signatory of the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty which obliges its members to not develop, manufacture or acquire, possess or have control over nuclear weapons.

At the meeting of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Commission in Bali last year, Malaysia supported the idea of organising a conference on nuclear weapon-free zones.

In the larger context, Washington, for example, had on many occasions, reiterated its active support for Asean member states in the nonproliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as in nuclear safety.

Under the administration of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Malaysia is playing an even greater role globally in voicing its opinion on nuclear issues to ensure global peace and stability.

When Obama made a phone call to Najib on June 26, 2009, one of the issues discussed was concerning nuclear, where the US leader sought the help of Malaysia towards ensuring a nuclear-free Korean peninsula following nuclear proliferation by Pyongyang.

Malaysia's position on North Korea's nuclear issue is also clear from the beginning, that its nuclear weapons programme posed a challenge towards peace in the region, and Kuala Lumpur had either voiced its deep concern or condemned Pyongyang, for instance when it undertook nuclear test three years ago, reminding them that this represented a serious setback to efforts in keeping the region free from nuclear weapons.

On many occasions, Malaysia had also been firm on another nuclear related issue -- not

allowing the country to be used as a transit point or conduit for trade in materials that could be used to make weapons of mass destruction, including those that can be used for making nuclear weapons.

And at the 2010 Summit, Malaysia had proposed the establishment of a United Nations convention on nuclear security to strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to promote and ensure universal nuclear security.

Speaking at that summit, Najib had stressed that nuclear energy should only be deployed for peaceful means while urging all countries to exercise full transparency in their nuclear programmes and to adhere to the IAEA and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) provisions.

As of July 2011, 189 recognised states are party to the treaty, which aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology and to promote cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The Prime Minister further stated that he had agreed to work with Obama to strengthen the NPT and committed to collaborating with international partners to prevent illicit trafficking of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

In the past in recognising Malaysia's active role on nuclear issues, Malaysia was also elected to chair the Board of Governors of the IAEA, the UN atomic watchdog.

On Iran's nuclear issue too, Malaysia's stand is in line with its global stand on nuclear weapons, that Tehran's nuclear programmes should be used for peaceful purposes only.

In continuing to play its role, Malaysia also participated at the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in Vienna, June last year, organised after the March 2011 nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear plant in Japan.

In the latest development last month, Malaysia had pushed for a proposal that called for the Conference on Disarmament (CD), to expand its membership from the current 65 countries.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman stressed that the proposal would ensure a greater engagement for members to play their part and collectively address the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation.

He pointed out that Malaysia were committed towards the disarmament process and initiated a resolution titled "Follow up to the advisory opinion of the ICJ on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons" at the United Nations general assembly and had since then been tabled annually.

As such, Malaysia's track record on its views and stand on nuclear issues, especially nuclear weapons, are something the country can be proud off, be it at regional or international foras such as at the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) or the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) and the world can expect this to continue.

On the domestic front too, the government's position on nuclear energy is clear, as stated by the Prime Minister last year, following the Fukushima nuclear plant meltdown, that the government was not in a rush to crystalise Malaysia's nuclear power plan, and its viability was still being evaluated.

In December 2010, the government had announced plans to build two nuclear power plants.

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Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v6/newsindex.php?id=654826>