

'Is US building army base in Sabah?'

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By Arfa Yunus

Shafie Apdal says any such army base will bring long-term damage and also questions rationale for sending troops to the Middle-East when Sabah is facing security threats.

KUALA LUMPUR: Sacked Rural and Regional Development Minister Shafie Apdal today asked if it's true that Putrajaya had allowed the United States to build an army base in Sabah.

He posed the question in the Dewan Rakyat today and said if this rumour turned out to be true, it would only show Malaysia's inability to defend its own country.

"If it is true, as an MP from Sabah, I reject this move. We have seen what happened to other countries when they let the US build an army base.

"Not only will the country will be destroyed, but the people too will lose their lives. If the base is set up in our country, there will be long-term damage."

Shafie earlier talked on the security problem in Sabah, especially in his Semporna constituency, which he said was facing threats from pirates.

He also commented on Defence Minister Hishammuddin Hussein's remarks today that the country was involved in a military exercise in the Middle-East.

Shafie, who is also a Umno vice-president, questioned the need to send the country's troops for the military exercise when Sabah was facing security threats.

"What's the point of sending our troops to Yemen and other countries when we can't even take care of our own village?

"Another thing that I want to talk about is the tourism industry, which is also related to the security problems. With the economic situation now, we should be able to increase the number of tourists.

"Sipadan Island is one of the most beautiful islands in the world but the number of tourists has dropped."

Tony Pua (DAP-Petaling Jaya Utara) interjected and asked Shafie the rationale behind allowing the US to build an army base in the country, claiming that China may also build an army base in Malaysia.

"Are we going to welcome these two big powers to our country?" Pua asked.

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