

Nuclear Terrorists Now Global Concern - Zahid

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From Hafizah Kamaruddin

WASHINGTON, April 1 (Bernama) -- The threat of nuclear terrorists which has a big impact on world security is the main topic of discussions at the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) here.

Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said this was because the threat of nuclear terrorists was not a concern of one country alone, but had become global concern as global security was a very important matter.

Therefore, world leaders' attention and concerns over this issue are vital, he told the Malaysian media here Thursday night.

Also present was Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Madius Tangau.

Ahmad Zahid said the matter was raised at the working dinner hosted by the United States President Barack Obama in conjunction with the NSS, which was attended by the heads of delegations from 53 countries at the White House.

Other things that were discussed during the dinner were three possible scenarios; with the first scenario being the possibility that a nuclear weapon falls into the hands of terrorists and is used to destroy the countries of their choice.

The second scenario is when terrorists hijack and use nuclear assets, especially in the area of energy reactor, which can cause destruction in the region, and the third scenario anticipates the seizure of vulnerable nuclear materials that could be turned into nuclear weapons, he said.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also Malaysia's Home Minister, said there was a general agreement among the leaders about the three scenarios, with several recommendations made to make the world free from nuclear.

He said the summit also discussed the safety of chemical and biological weapons, as well as the concern of not only the countries with nuclear weapons, but also those without.

Some countries even expressed the need for this summit, which began in 2010 to discuss nuclear terrorism, should be continued even if Obama is no longer the US president, he said.

Ahmad Zahid said despite being a country without nuclear power, Malaysia would continue to ensure that the police and other security agencies would give serious consideration to this latest threat.

Global concerns of nuclear terrorism has increased following the suicide terrorist attacks in European countries, as well as reports stating that there were at least two terrorists targeting a nuclear plant in Belgium.

On his meeting with US National Security Advisor Susan Elizabeth Rice on Wednesday, Ahmad Zahid said Rice has praised Malaysia's efforts in addressing the issue of refugees, mainly from Myanmar and Syria.

He said Rice had also expressed hope that Malaysia could participate in the Summit on Refugees, which will be hosted by Obama at the next United Nations General Assembly.

Ahmad Zahid said he had also expressed Malaysia's stand in the South China Sea issue which must be resolved immediately.

"The best mechanism (to resolve the issue) is through negotiation and consultation so that it will not cause tension which may bring about security impact to Southeast Asia region, in particular," he added.

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