

Dewan Rakyat approves motion on Mahathir's speech at UNGA

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 15 (Bernama) -- The Dewan Rakyat today approved a motion to make the address of Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the 73rd United Nations General Assembly as the basis of Malaysia's foreign policy.

Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, when winding up debate on the motion, explained that it had been planned to have Dr Mahathir's speech at UNGA in New York on Sept 28 to be debated in Parliament before being adopted as the basis of the foreign policy.

"The speech has been made the basis of the foreign policy because we are a new government and we have to lay out the framework of the foreign policy. It does not mean that every speech of the Prime Minister will be brought up in this House," he said.

Dr Mahathir, in his speech at UNGA, had among other things touched on the position and foreign policy of the country based on principles such as not favouring any power, neutrality and practising the 'prosper thy neighbour' philosophy.

He had also emphasised Malaysia's relations with the world's major powers, as well as other issues such as the situation in Palestine, the plight of the Muslims in Rakhine (Myanmar) and the trade war between the economic powers.

Saifuddin said the government did not deny the foreign policy that had existed before, as several opposition MPs had alleged during the debate.

"We are most careful not to use a new foreign policy. From the moment I took over as the foreign minister, I have never said there is a new foreign policy. The word used is framework; the framework of the new Malaysian foreign policy. It is Malaysia Baharu (New

Malaysia), not a new foreign policy for Malaysia,” he said.

During the debate, former foreign minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman (IND-Kimanis) and Datuk Seri Tajuddin Abdul Rahman (BN-Pasir Salak) said the text of Dr Mahathir’s speech had been implemented by the previous BN government and, as such, it was unnecessary to adopt it as the new foreign policy.

Meanwhile, while replying to an interjection by Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim (BN-Arau) who had wanted to know the government efforts to rehabilitate the relations with the Saudi Arabian government following the closure of the King Salman Centre for International Peace here, Saifuddin said he had explained the issues related to the two countries to the Saudi Arabian ambassador and foreign minister.

“I am confident it (the relationship between the two countries) is still good,” he said.

The Dewan Rakyat sits again tomorrow.

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