

WE WILL FACE THE REDS ON OUR OWN: ^{N.S.T. 15/3/80} MAHATHIR

KOTA BARU, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad declared today that Malaysia would remain a strong Islamic nation capable of defeating the communist threat.

In facing the enemy, he stressed that the country would have to draw upon her own resources.

"If we are weak, we will be forced to beg from foreign powers. If we seek aid from the Soviet Union, we may be influenced by communism and if we turn to America we may be made their tools," he said.

He told some 350 community development leaders attending a leadership course at the Ismail Petra Secondary School here of the need for the nation to re-arrange her priorities.

On Islam

"With proper Islamic values, we can face the communist threat and Malaysia will not become another Afghanistan or another South Yemen," he said.

He regretted that Islamic countries such as South Yemen and Afghanistan had turned communist.

"Islam was brought to this country from the Yemen region and Afghanistan was once an orthodox Islamic nation which strongly opposed pressure from the British and Russians," he said.

"Today, both these countries have rejected Islam."

He said PAS had been going around telling the Malays economic development was not important in Islam.

"But if Malaysia remain poor and backward, can we defend ourselves when we are threatened? Can we have a fully-equipped army if we are poor?" he asked.

Unity, he said, was Islam's strength in the struggle against communism but PAS, he added, has the view that Islamic brotherhood was not important.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he noted with concern that Datuk Asri's criticisms of the government were similar in tone to those of "Suara Revolusi," the underground communist liberation radio.

"As Datuk Asri has clearly indicated his support of the Domino theory saying Malaysia would fall to the communists one day, there is no point in his carrying on his struggle," he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister said PAS was propagating negative values to the people and this, he said, would result in a weak and backward society.

Shallow

He said some people wanted Kelantan to remain isolated and poor — with no highway link to the West Coast as they feared Kelantan would be swamped by outsiders.

"This is shallow thinking. PAS kept Kelantan isolated for 18 years and this resulted in the Kelantanese migrating to Kedah, Selangor, Trengganu, Pahang and Singapore for jobs," he said.

"I know of Datuk Asri's campaign against me. He knows that I observe my prayers and that I do not take liquor and so he talks about my forefathers.

The Kedah people describe this situation as "Habis modal" (running out of ideas). Islam does not teach its followers to make false accusations and personal attacks," he said.

"We have never talked about his houses in London and Cairo. What we question are his retrogressive values which had confused Malay society."