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MAHATHIR

FROM RACHMAN NORDIN

PHILADELPHIA, OCT. 9 (BERNAMA)-- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID MUSLIMS CAN ACHIEVE GREATNESS TO +STAND AS TALL "AN-D-S-IT AS LOW+ AS OTHER WORLD COMMUNITIES IF THEY PERSIST TO BE KNOWLEDGEABLE, UNANTAGONISTIC AND HAVE THE RIGHT PHILOSOPHY. AND INTERPRETATION OF ISLAM.

THAT GREATNESS, HE SAID, GOULD NOT BE ACHIEVED IN ONE DAY BUT THE FOUNDATION FOR IT SHOULD BE LAID NOW.

THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO IS ON A SIX-DAY VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES, SAID MALAYSIA BELIEVED ISLAMIC GREATNESS COULD BE ACHIEVED NOT BY BEING ANTAGONISTIC BUT BY EMPHASIZING SELF-DISCIPLINE AND AVOIDING DEVIATIONIST INFLUENCES.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR WAS ADDRESSING MUSLIM SCHOLARS AT A MEETING ORGANISED BY THE RELIGION DEPARTMENT OF TEMPLE UNIVERSITY, PHILADELPHIA? YESTERDAY.

HE SAID ACHIEVING THE GREATNESS FOR ISLAM SHOULD BE THE MISSION OF EVERY MUSLIM AND NOT GOVERNMENTS OR INDIVIDUALS ALONE.

AS FOR MALAYSIA, ALTHOUGH THE COUNTRY COULD NOT CONTRIBUTE MUCH, IT BELIEVED PUTTING INTO PRACTICE THE MALAY PROVERB OF +SLOWLY BUILDING MOUNTAINS OUT OF ANTHILLS+ (SEDIKIT-SEDIKIT LAMA-LAMA JADI BUKIT) --MORE

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MAHATHIR 2 PHILADELPHIA

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ATTRIBUTED THE PROBLEMS FACED BY MUSLIMS NOW TO THEIR NOT BEING KNOWLEDGEABLE TO CONTROL THEIR WEALTH, NOT ASSERTING MILITARY PROWESS AND LACK OF CAPABILITIES IN MANY AREAS.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WOULD BE SADDENED TO SEE EVENTUALLY MUSLIMS BECOME POOR AGAIN IF THEY MERELY USED THEIR WEALTH FOR PHYSICAL GLORIFICATION AND HAD NO CONTROL OF THEIR OWN ECONOMY.

FOR EXAMPLE WEALTHY MUSLIM NATIONS-NOW INVESTED THEIR MONEY ABROAD AND IT WOULD BE SAD TO SEE THEM NOT BEING ABLE TO WITHDRAW THEIR INVESTMENT ON CALL AS BY ALLOWING THAT, THE WESTERN WORLD WOULD FEAR IT WOULD LEAD TO THE COLLAPSE THEIR ECONOMY.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THERE WERE STILL MALAYSIANS WHO WERE SENT ABROAD TO ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE NOT UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF THEIR GOING THERE.--MORE

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MAHATHIR '3 PHILADELPHIA,

HE TOLD THE SCHOLARS THAT THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD IN ALL: SINCERITY NOT ALLOW DEVIATIONIST INFLUENCES TO DIVIDE MUSLIMS IN THE COUNTRY.

THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, WOULD CONTINUE TO CONSULT SCHOLARS, LOCAL AND THOSE FROM OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY, TO ENSURE THAT THE RIGHT INTERPRETATION OF ISLAM WAS BEING FOLLOWED.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR LATER ANSWERED QUESTIONS ON SUBJECTS RANGING FROM THE MALAYSIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM, THE COUNTRY'S ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC COOPERATION TO ENFORCEMENT OF SYARIAH LAWS IN MALAYSIA.

THE MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY PROFESSORS, POST GRADUATE STUDENTS AND OTHER SCHOLARS INCLUDING MALAYSIANS STUDYING AT TEMPLE UNIVERSITY.

IT WAS CHAIRED BY THE HEAD OF THE UNIVERSITY'S RELIGION DEPARTMENT PROF. ISMAIL FAROUKI.--MORE

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EARLIER DURING A DIALOGUE WITH MUSLIM SCHOLARS FROM THE UNIVERSITY INCLUDING MALAYSIAN POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT ALLOW ANY MINORITY GROUPS TO IMPOSE ITS WILL UPON THE MAJORITY PERTAINING TO THE QUESTION OF ENFORCING SYARIAH LAWS.

HE SAID THE COUNTRY HAD A COUNCIL OF ULAMAKS WHOSE AUTHORITY WITH REGARD TO +FATWAS+ (RULINGS) SHOULD BE ACCEPTED.

HE SAID HE SAW NO REASON FOR DISUNITY AMONG MUSLIMS IF THE AUTHORITY OF THE COUNCIL WAS ACCEPTED BUT INSTEAD, CERTAIN QUARTERS WOULD RIDICULE DECISIONS BY THE COUNCIL AS THOSE MADE BY +DOGS OF THE GOVERNMENT+ BUT WOULD ACCEPT THOSE WHICH FAVOURED THEM (THE DETRACTORS).

HE TOLD THE GATHERING THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD TO BE VERY CAREFUL IN THIS MATTER SO THAT IT DID NOT LOSE CREDIBILITY AND BE LABELLED UNISLAMIC BY THOSE WHO WERE ACTUALLY THE ONES COMING UP WITH UNISLAMIC INTERPRETATIONS.--MORE

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TO ANOTHER QUESTION, THE PRIME MINISTER REPLIED THAT MALAYSIA WOULD PREFER NOT TO RUSH IN IMPLEMENTING SYARIAH LAWS ON NON-MUSLIMS LEST BY DOING SO THE END RESULTS WOULD ONLY BE CHAOS AND DO MORE DAMAGE AS WELL AS DEFEAT THE MUSLIMS.

IN THIS CONTEXT MALAYSIA WOULD DO WHAT IT COULD AT A GIVEN TIME EACH TIME CONSIDERING +OUR OWN CAPACITY WITHOUT LOSING THE FACILITY TO THINK AND AVOIDING THE 'I COULDN'T CARE LESS FOR OTHERS' ATTITUDE.+

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ANSWERED QUESTIONS INCLUDING THOSE FROM POST GRADUATE STUDENTS-FROM NIGERIA, INDIA, PAKISTAN AND EGYPT DURING THE SESSION.

HE CAUTIONED THAT *IT IS NO GOOD TO INSIST ON SOMETHING WITHOUT BEING SURE IT WILL SUCCEED OR FAIL MERELY BECAUSE WE ARE MUSLIMS.+

HE TOLD THE SCHOLARS THAT MUSLIMS SHOULD SHOW MORE HUMILITY AND LESS ARROGANCE, FOR HISTORY HAD PROVED THAT IT WAS ARROGANCE THAT HAD CAUSED ALL THE CATASTROPHES IN THE WORLD.,

ASKED ON MALAYSIA'S ROLE IN THE GLOBAL ISLAMISATION PROCESS, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE PLEDGES BY VARIOUS MUSLIM COUNTRIES FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE UMMAH BE FULFILLED AS HE FELT THAT MANY PROMISES WERE STILL NOT MADE GOOD. --BERNAMA

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