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Hayden-Reaction

LEADERS SLAM HAYDEN FOR REMARKS ABOUT MALAYSIA, MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, April 4 (Bernama) -- Malaysian leaders today roundly condemned retired Australian Governor-General Bill Hayden for his remarks that Malaysia and other Asian countries were rascist.

Umno Youth chief Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik said the movement was angered by Hayden's statements which showed his ignorance about the reality in Malaysia.

"In fact, he should learn from Malaysia how we restructured society through the New Economic Policy which brought about prosperity for all," he told reporters after attending a leadership convention organised by the movement here.

He urged Hayden, who as Governor-General was Queen Elizabeth II's representative, to visit Malaysia and experience the harmony and prosperity of the multi-racial country.

"We invite him to come here and see for himself how our wisdom in restructuring society has succeeded in achieving a level of justice accepted by all races," he said.

In a radio interview in Sydney, Hayden singled out Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as a rascist who administered a policy of discrimination against the Chinese in education and, he said, the Indians were dirt poor.

Strained Malaysia-Australia relations were patched up when Dr Mahathir and the new Australian Prime Minister John Howard met in Brisbane where Dr Mahathir made a refuelling stop enroute home from an official visit to New Zealand recently.

In IPOH, Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said Malaysians had every right to speak out against such a ridiculous statement made by the former politician and so-called statesman who knew so little about Malaysia and the racial harmony which existed here.

"It is sad to see that while the new Australian government is trying to be friendly with us, people like Bill Hayden try to sour the relationship," he told reporters after attending a briefing on development in Perak by Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib at Casuarina Hotel.

"I think the Australians prefer to see us swing from tree to tree wearing loincloth so that they can become the master while forgetting that the world has changed," he added.

He said Australia had been criticising Malaysia and other Asian countries to cover up its incapability and inefficiency to join them as the big players in the Asia Pacific Rim.

Dr Lim hoped the new Australian leadership would bring a new breath of fresh air to build a better relationship with other Asian countries.

Member of Parliament for Rompin Datuk Dr Jamaludin Jarjis said Hayden's accusations smacked of colonial overtones.

"He still thinks that he's part of a colonial power," he said, adding that Hayden could not accept that Malaysia was doing better than Australia economically.

He said while Hayden claimed that there was discrimination against the Chinese and Indians in Malaysia, he should look at Australia itself where there had been cases of its Aborigines dying in jails.

"What justice is he talking about?... I, as an MP, condemn this kind of people who still think that they are the colonial power," he said after attending the presentation of contributions to the Bosnia educational aid

fund in Kuala Lumpur.

Although he believed that Hayden's statements did not reflect the sentiments of the Australian government, he expected it to make a statement regarding Hayden's accusations. -- BERNAMA

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