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Rahim-Singapore

SINGAPORE LEADERS' STATEMENT AN INSULT

MELAKA, Sept 7 (Bernama) -- The Umno Youth today described as an insult the comments by Singapore leaders that the republic might be forced to re-merge with Malaysia if its economic competitiveness was to falter.

Its leader, Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik, said that the statement was an insult meant to belittle Malaysia and warned Singapore's leaders not to repeat such statements.

Speaking to reporters here, he said that Umno Youth fully supported the statement by Umno president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the matter yesterday.

"The statement to threaten Singaporeans not only lacked sincerity, it was totally irresponsible," he said.

The Prime Minister had stated after the Umno Supreme Council meeting that Umno was offended by the statement as it tried to show how bad Malaysia was for not practising meritocracy.

Singapore leaders have repeatedly stated that the republic might be forced to ask Malaysia to take it back if the republic loses its economic competitiveness.

Rahim said that if the PAP, Singapore's ruling party, had any problems, "solve them within the domestic context...don't resort to scapegoat politicking by picking on Malaysia."

"By referring to Malaysia as a country said to be not as great or advanced and does not practise meritocracy like Singapore to threaten the people...Singapore leaders have insulted Malaysia."

He questioned Singapore's democracy and meritocracy because there was clear discrimination against the Singapore Malays in the government, armed forces and economic field.

"The practice of political freedom is stronger in Malaysia than in Singapore which treats opposition leaders very badly...criticisms by the opposition will only be thrown out," he said.

In fact, he said, there was a Singapore parliamentarian arrested for issuing a statement quoting figures different from the official government statistics.

"We in Malaysia not only practise democracy in a greater sense but also meritocracy and tolerance as part of our culture and policy," he said.

He said that in Singapore, the Malays did not have a place but in Malaysia, there are two Chinese Chief Ministers, in Sabah and Pulau Pinang.

Rahim said that meritocracy and tolerance in Malaysia had enabled the two posts to be held by the Chinese although the Malays should have been appointed because they were the majority race.

"We fail to understand why Malaysia was picked as a reference," he said.

Rahim also said that the Barisan Nasional (BN) Youth would send a strong protest to the United States against the US missile strikes at targets in Iraq.

He said that discussions would be held between the Youth wings of the BN component parties to prepare the protest note.

The BN Youth planned to hand over the protest note to the US embassy in Kuala Lumpur, he added.

Rahim said that the US missile strikes this week were believed to be motivated by internal politics, to boost the presidential campaign.

The US had failed to consult its allies and the missile strikes did not

receive the support of most countries which had previously given their support when Iraq invaded Kuwait, he added.

The US did not have a strong basis for the attack this time as the issue of the Kurds was Iraq's internal problem.

On the peace pact between the Philippine government and the Moro National Liberation Front, Rahim said that Umno Youth planned to participate in the reconstruction of the south Philippine province.

He said that the peace pact signed on Monday paved the way for such cooperation. -- BERNAMA

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