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Umno-Singapore

UMNO YOUTH URGES GOH TO MEET MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 10 (Bernama) -- Umno Youth said today Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong should meet Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the wake of statements made by the republic's leaders which insinuated that there is no meritocracy in Malaysia.

Datuk Nazri Aziz, the Umno Youth international affairs chairman, said Goh should sort out the negative remarks with Dr Mahathir.

"The more statements you make, the more serious the problem is," he said after a dialogue between the international affairs bureaux of Umno Youth and MCA.

Nazri, who is a Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, said it was hard for Umno Youth to accept Goh's explanation that he was puzzled at why statements made in the republic were misinterpreted here.

He said it was naive for Goh to think that his audience were just Singaporeans when Malaysia was mentioned or that Malaysians would not feel offended by his statement.

"As a Prime Minister, it's not the intention that is important but what people perceive from his statement," said Nazri.

Umno could not let the matter rest because no country would like to be insulted like this, he said.

MCA international affairs chairman Chor Chee Heung said the Singapore Prime Minister should be more sensitive when making a statement if he did not wish to be seen as meddling in the affairs of other countries.

He also said that Singapore should not be suspicious of Malaysia as long as the two countries treated each other as independent nations although they had shared a common political history.

Yesterday, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi conveyed Umno's displeasure at the statements from across the Causeway after the republic's Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew, in replying to a question at a media gathering in June, said he did not discount the possibility of Singapore rejoining Malaysia one day.

Abdullah said Umno felt offended by the statements.

Last Friday, Dr Mahathir who spoke in his capacity as Umno president said Malaysia should not be used as a bogeyman by Singapore to make its own people strive for greater development.

Goh said he was puzzled and did not expect Malaysia to react "so harshly" because there was never any intention by Singapore leaders to provoke Malaysians or impugn the Malaysian system of government.

-- BERNAMA

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