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Mahathir-Islam

MAHATHIR URGES MUSLIMS TO REFORM THOUGHTS

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 22 (Bernama) -- Prime minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged Muslims to bring about reformation to potted thinking which confuses them as such thoughts are not based on the true teachings of Islam.

Dr Mahathir said present day realities have to be accepted and self-deception of the true teachings of Islam could only undermine efforts by Muslims to take on the challenges of the 21st century.

"The reformation that is required of Muslims is one that can guide them back to Islamic teachings unadulterated by deviant interpretations, edicts and fatwas surfacing during the past 1,400 years after Hegira," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this when delivering a key-note address at a conference here today on reformation and challenges facing Muslims in the region in the 21st century.

The prime minister the reformation should take back Muslims to the teachings of the Quran and the wisdom of Prophet Muhammad which put first brotherhood and avoidance of hostilities among Muslims with divergent interpretations of what Islam should be.

Dr Mahathir also urged Muslims to master other disciplines apart from religious knowledge to safeguard them from their enemies who are out to split and weaken them.

Dr Mahathir said the challenges posed by the advent of the 21st century are compounded by the information and other new technologies which would radically alter the lives of mankind.

He said no one could isolate oneself from the world community and such technologies.

Mastery of the technologies would enable those possessing them to do almost anything they fancied including discriminating against Muslims and Islamic countries, he said.

This had happened in Bosnia, Chechnya, Pakistan and south Asia where those in possession of high technology allowed mass murders of Muslims, he said.

He said there was no disputing the necessity for Muslims to acquire religious knowledge but there was also no reason why they should only specialise in that field alone.

"Does it mean that all Muslim students should be experts only theological disciplines to the extent of ignoring mastery of other fields which could develop and safeguard Muslims at large," he said.

He said reinforcing Muslims' resilience and that of Islamic countries required time, political stability, efficient administration, knowledge and wealth as well as ownership of sophisticated industries and defence systems.

Dr Mahathir said not a small number of Muslims, especially the extremists, who were impatient and hasty in carrying out revolutions and committing acts of blind terrorism against other Muslims.

Because they were ill-prepared in their actions, they only wasted whatever little potency they possessed without really achieving anything in the end, he said.

Instead, he said, they only created chaos and turmoil in Islamic countries and in doing so they had indirectly and unconsciously worked hand in hand with the enemies of Islam, including Zionists.

"Because of such people, not many Islamic countries are being run well

and developed to face the challenges of the 21st century whereas followers of other religions were progressive, stronger and more arrogant in oppressing the backward, weaker and divided and easily manipulated Muslims," he said.

Dr Mahathir said besides a stable government, what also could save the Muslims was a democratically elected Islamic administration through consensus and not by deceit or by putting fear among Muslims through deviant teachings.

He said divergent views and misinterpretations of Islamic teachings would persist in the Islamic society.

But those who had deviated, he said, had to be guided back to the true path but the approach to doing that should be more subtle and with finesse through consensus and not pressure, oppression and injustice.

Dr Mahathir said tolerance and brotherhood should be put first in the even of disagreement.

Attempts to use force which could only lead to split and endless violence should be avoided at all costs, he added. -- BERNAMA

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