

12 OCT 1997

Mahathir-Colonisation

NEW ERA OF COLONISATION USING ECONOMIC STRENGTH, SAYS DR M

LANGKAWI, Oct 12 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today told the people to be wary of the new era of colonisation using economic strength to suppress countries which had been colonised before.

"After failing to colonise Malaysia, they try to colonise using their economic power and wealth to enslave us again," he said told a gathering to welcome him at the Langkawi International Airport, here.

Some 1,000 people including Umno members and representatives of non-governmental organisations and the hotel sector had gathered at the airport to express their support for Dr Mahathir.

The prime minister arrived here for a one-day visit to inspect the progress of development projects on this tourist island.

Dr Mahathir said economic strength had been used to force countries, which had to borrow funds, to bow to their wishes.

"Already many countries have been forced to give in to this new form of colonisation but Alhamdulillah (thank God) we have not bowed to them yet," he said.

He said they were envious and tried to impoverish Malaysia which had developed fast and could afford to provide jobs for its people.

They tried to suppress so that the value of the ringgit would fall, he said.

"This is the old way of dictatorship to muzzle the weak," he said.

To overcome this problem, Dr Mahathir urged the people to be united, disciplined and not to resort to actions which could adversely affect the country.

He reminded businessmen to avoid profiteering by raising prices of goods for no reason and retrenching workers.

"If we all maintain the prevailing unity, InsyaAllah (God willing), we will be able to fight the colonisation of the modern era," he said.

Dr Mahathir also chided the Cable News Network (CNN) television station for trying to put Malaysia and Indonesia at loggerheads on the depreciation of the rupiah.

He said the CNN had questioned Indonesia's central bank governor whether the fall of the rupiah was due to his (Dr Mahathir's) speech.

"The question was repeated although the governor replied that the fluctuations of the rupiah was normal and he did not blame me,

"I criticise the CNN, why pit us against each other, so that the governor will be angry with me and hence ties between Malaysia and Indonesia will be strained," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the CNN did not stop there but instead screened several times the visual of the racial riots in Malaysia on May 13, 1969.

"They repeated it several times by saying although Malaysia is peaceful now, the racial riots among the Malays, Chinese and Indians will recur to warn foreigners not to invest in or do business in Malaysia or visit the country," he added.

Dr Mahathir returned to Kuala Lumpur in the evening. -- BERNAMA

NH MAI TS JK