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Kuan Yew-Reactions (round-up)

REVIEW MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE TIES, SAYS UMNO YOUTH

KUALA LUMPUR, March 15 (Bernama) -- The backlash over Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew's derogatory statement over Johor continued today with some calling for a review of diplomatic ties between Malaysia and Singapore.

Some were also not satisfied with yesterday's apology made by the former Singapore Prime Minister, demanding instead that he retracted the offending statement from his affidavit.

Lee, in a sworn affidavit on Jan 27 filed in a defamation suit against Singapore opposition figure Tang Liang Hong, had described Johor as a place "notorious for shootings, muggings and car-jackings". Tang, who lost in the recent Singapore general election, went to Johor after that alleging that death threats had been made against him in the republic.

In IPOH, Umno Youth leader Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi called on the government to review the "basis of agreement and diplomatic relations" with Singapore over the statement.

The government must make a decision on the matter at the next Cabinet weekly meeting as Lee was being too much, he said.

"We urge the Cabinet to review the basis of the agreement with Singapore as it seems that we have been very accommodating and this has been misinterpreted by Singapore," he said after addressing an the Perak level Umno Youth convention.

Ahmad Zahid said Malaysia must display its sensitivity towards many agreements signed with Singapore especially on the supply of water to the republic state and the use of air space, which according to him, are outdated and should be reviewed.

The Umno Youth also proposed that the government takes immediate action to stop exports of Malaysian goods through Singapore since the country has many ports of its own.

He said it is not enough for Lee just to tender his apology for the offending statement on Johor since the affidavit has become court document and if Lee is sincere in preserving ties with Malaysia the reference to Johor should be retracted and expunged.

Last Thursday, Lee said he had no intention to cause offence and apologise unreservedly for the offence caused to the government and the people of Malaysia by his statement on Johor in his affidavit.

In LANGKAWI, MCA International Bureau chairman Chor Chee Heung urged Lee to file a second affidavit as his apology was not enough.

Chor said the bureau felt Lee should submit a fresh affidavit since there was no truth to the statement on Johor made in the first affidavit.

As a lawyer, Lee should know that affidavit is a sworn and signed document, he said.

"If Lee sincerely regrets his statement then he should apologise openly to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the people of Malaysia", said Chor who is also Transport Ministry Parliamentary Secretary.

PAS Youth secretary Haji Mahfuz Omar felt Lee's apology was not the answer to the controversy since Singapore had on many occasions being rude to the people in this country.

In ALOR GAJAH, Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Zin Abdul Ghani said the Singapore government must introduce a code of ethics for its leaders, banning them from making negative remarks on neighbouring

countries.

Lee's statement on Johor also surprised Indonesian leaders and the people, said Mohd Zin who returned yesterday from a six-day working visit to Sumatera.

"They expressed disbelief and did not agree with (Lee's) view," Mohd Zin said.

Indonesian leaders, in Sumatera, interviewed said Lee's statement was hard to believe as they had been to Johor and it was certainly not truth.

In PULAU PINANG, Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon described Lee's statement on Johor as "menepuk air dalam tulang, terpercik ke mukanya sendiri".

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If Johor was unsafe, as claimed by Lee, then why would Tang escaped to such a country, he said.

"Is it to show that it is worse in Singapore to the extent that its people are willing to escape even to an unsafe place like Johor?" Koh said.

Koh, who is Gerakan vice-president, believed many Singaporeans did not share Lee's view on Johor or they would not have visited or invested in properties in Johor. -- BERNAMA

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