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Gerakan agrees with PM's views on Singapore

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Gerakan today came out in support of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement yesterday that Singapore is an insensitive neighbouring country which goes to the extent of exploiting the weaknesses of its neighbours.

The party's deputy secretary-general and Johor deputy chairman Dr Tan Kee Kwong in a statement said Singapore must look forward instead of harping on old sensitive issues with regard to Malaysia.

Gerakan was responding to the memoirs of Singapore's Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew which made several allegations against Malaysia.

Lee's memoirs claimed that Malaysia had used "bullying and intimidation" tactics during the two countries' brief federation and still believed it could use the water issue to cow its neighbour.

"The various allegations against Malaysia written by Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew does not help at all to improve the relations between both nations," Dr Tan said.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar described the memoirs as manipulation of history.

Syed Hamid said all sorts of past issues were raised and racial sentiments fanned.

"He is good at manipulating facts to make them appear as if that was what actually happened and is very insensitive towards a neighbouring country."

Syed Hamid also said the manipulation was not healthy for a leader who had held the highest post in the republic.

In Malacca, Umno supreme council member Datuk Wira Mohd Ali Rustam, who is also State Umno liaison deputy chief, described Lee's memoirs as nothing new and special.

"He is actually running out of ideas ... that is why he is harping on old issues.

"By constantly coming up with negative remarks about Malaysia, he is hoping that he can remain forever in power. As a senior minister, such derogatory remarks definitely give him some form of political mileage."

In Johor, State Umno Youth chairman Hasni Mohammad said that Lee's caustic memoirs would not distract the State Youth movement from its efforts in trying to smoothen relations between Malaysia and Singapore.

"Lee's memoirs must not be allowed to hinder us from striving to improve relations between our countries. We must constantly move forward and seek new perspectives."

Hasni said he was very puzzled by Lee's views that Malaysia had in the past used the threat of cutting water supply as a leverage in its relations with the republic.

"Malaysia has been at the forefront of many humanitarian efforts, even in far-off places like Bosnia and Africa.

"Our leaders and the younger generation here understand the need to promote international understanding and cooperation."

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