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LEAD Gore-Reaction

GORE CONTINUES TO TAKE FLAK

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 19 (Bernama) -- US vice president Al Gore who angered Malaysians by publicly supporting the so-called movement for reform while being a guest of the nation, continued to be condemned by a wide spectrum of the Malaysian society, including from 10,000 callers to a special telephone line.

The calls were received through a 24-hour line at 03-4441199 installed by the Barisan Nasional (BN) Youth yesterday for anyone wanting to vent the anger at Gore.

According to staffers manning the telephone line, until 5 pm today more than 10,000 calls were received from callers condemning the interference by the US vice president.

"Thousands made calls today describing Al Gore as rude and being too much," one of them said.

Another line at 03-2025615, put up by another patriotic body also received calls from the public. An official for the organisation said up until 5 pm today more than 1,000 calls were received.

"Every day 1,000 names will be published in the local newspapers and it would always be updated," he said.

Addressing the Apec Business Summit dinner on Monday night, Gore, who was the only guest speaker, praised the so-called movement for reform, describing anti-government protestors as the "brave people of Malaysia."

Immediately after the speech he left the function which was attended by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and other leaders attending the APEC summit.

Since then Gore had been strongly condemned by Malaysians of all walks of life from cabinet ministers to the man on the street.

MCA publicity bureau chief Datuk Wong See Wah today not only condemned Gore for openly expressing support for anti-government demonstrators but also his lack of common decency as an honoured guest.

Wong said Gore's remarks had threatened Malaysia-US bilateral relations.

"Malaysia is a constitutional democracy with a fair judiciary and has its own authority in monitoring issues pertaining to law. We do not need outside interference or outsiders to teach us," he said in a statement.

Wong described Gore's remarks as "rude, arrogant and exceeding his limits and mirrored a US policy of bullying other countries."

As such Malaysians should be wary of US hegemonism and unite to support the governing Barisan Nasional coalition led by Dr Mahathir.

In KUALA TERENGGANU, the state Umno Youth condemned Gore and described his remarks as seditious.

Its executive committee member Tengku Zainudin Tengku Zahid said: "The remarks could undermine peace and unity of the Malaysian people."

He said Gore should have left it to Malaysia's leadership to solve the country's own problems.

In JOHOR BAHRU, the Johor Umno liaison committee said the US had ulterior motives and had premeditated to interfere in local affairs.

Committee chairman and Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said Gore's remarks could incite more Malaysians to take to the streets to topple a democratically elected government.

"Gore was too much," he said.

In KEMAMAN, Umno Information Chief Datuk Dr Yusof Noor described

supporters of former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's so-called movement for reform as traitors and slaves of the US.

In KUANTAN, Lipis Umno division head Datuk Omar Othman said Gore's remarks was a major insult to the nation's leadership especially Dr Mahathir.

A group of 13 Malaysians identifying themselves as Corporate Citizens placed a full-page advertisement in the New Straits Times newspaper today to condemn Gore.

"The arrogant, ignorant and rude attitude is the not the stand of the United States and her citizens," they said in the advertisement.

As with other citizens, they said, Malaysians also love peace, development and prosperity which is evident in the country due to its political stability.

"We are very confident of the government we had chosen democratically," they said.

In LANGKAWI, Wanita UMNO chief Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman regarded Gore's dinner speech as a big mistake because of its irresponsible tones.

Zaharah said Gore should not have harped on Malaysia's sensitive internal issues when he came as the country's guest for the APEC summit.

-- BERNAMA

Team gm