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LID-Media (A Bernama news focus)

"LANGKAWI REVELATION" PROVES WESTERN MEDIA WRONG ALL ALONG

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LANGKAWI, July 26 (Bernama) -- When Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad attacked the Western media for misreporting about Malaysia, his detractors accused him of trying to cover up the country's "problems" but how does one justify that when almost half the African continent shares his views.

Today, the world, at least the developing nations, are beginning to recognise and understand, yet again, that the prime minister has been right all along about how the Western media have been "naughty", or rather nasty in their reporting.

And he is definitely not alone, not anymore.

It is only at the ongoing fourth Langkawi International Dialogue (LID) here that the "dark side" of the Western media was revealed to the world although the CNN was not there for coverage.

Some of Africa's influential leaders such as Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe and Namibian President Dr Sam Nujoma, for the first time, openly and in the presence of local and international journalists, lambasted certain Western media for distorting the facts about their countries.

Riots, racial tension, corruption and dictatorship have been among the favourite story line for the Western media when it comes to reporting about developing countries so much so that Sudanese President Lt Gen Omar Hassan Ahmad had to ask: "Has anybody heard anything good about Sudan."

The African leaders were relating their experience on the antics of the Western media at a special dialogue with senior news editors from Africa and Malaysia at the LID.

But it was not a Western media-bashing as would have been assumed by BBC's managing editor for World Service, Southeast Asia and the Pacific region, Chris Greene who was the sole Western media representative at the special dialogue.

Incidentally, Greene also took part in the lively discussion which was supposed to discuss the role of the media in forging smart partnership with governments.

The other African leaders who participated in the special dialogue were Botswana president Festus G.Mogae, King Mswati III of Swaziland, Mozambique president Joaquim Alberto Chissano, Lesotho Prime Minister P.B.Mosisili and South African vice president J.Zuma.

Other leaders include Seychelles vice president James Alix Michel.

During the one-hour special dialogue, the leaders diverted the media's attention from smart partnership to their role, particularly the Western media in maintaining peace, eradicating poverty, etc.

While locking their eyes at the BBC correspondent most of the time, the leaders did not waste much time in attacking the Western media for their biased reporting, portraying the African continent as racially-divided so much so that Dr Mahathir had nothing much to add.

When Chissano took great pains to appeal to the media of the North to report accurately about his country and other South countries, it reminded many from the local media fraternity about how it would have been for Dr Mahathir.

Observers said the fact that the African leaders have openly criticised the Western media clearly showed that they were disgusted and did not wish to remain silent anymore.

"They are now like going on a crusade against the Western media," says one media analyst from Africa.

They however did not believe that this would change anything as the Western media would continue with their "agenda" irrespective of whether their reports have been causing or escalating racial tension around the world, particularly in the developing nations.

But, the "Langkawi Revelation" has proved that Dr Mahathir has never been wrong in his judgment about the Western media, they added.

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