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Mahathir-Generation

THE FUTURE GENERATION DETERMINES THE NATION'S INDEPENDENCE, SAYS PM

BANGI, Sept 9 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the future generation determines whether or not Malaysia remains independent.

The prime minister however said he was confident that, like the present generation, the future generation would not be prepared to see Malaysia recolonised.

"That is why the future generation should know the actual situation in our country and should be responsible to the nation so that we will remain independent. Otherwise, believe me, we will be recolonised," he said when addressing thousands of students from various public and private universities at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), here.

Dr Mahathir said that attempts had been made to colonise the country and they almost succeeded.

"But we managed to thwart them this time. Whether or not we be able to thwart attempts to recolonise us in future depends not on the present generation but on your generation," he told the students.

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia had achieved much progress and people now know the country which went against advice by foreigners but the government had proven that it knows how to rule the country and that was the reason for Malaysia remaining an independent nation.

He said that there were countries which had allowed foreigners to determine their economic and political policies.

"But in Malaysia, we ensure that others have no right to interfere in our domestic affairs.

"We are prepared to be rejected by the people but we are not willing to see leaders of foreign countries, even a super power, coming here and telling the people to topple the leaders. If we were to allow them, foreigners will hold the political rein in our country...we will no longer be free, no longer independent and we will be fully colonised," he said.

Dr Mahathir cited as an example how a nation which was proud of its independence had to give in when placed under foreign powers.

Referring to how the government tackled the economic crisis in the initial stage, Dr Mahathir said that he had not agreed to the economic recovery measures implemented according to the advice of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

He said that following implementation for a period, it showed they were not the way to revive the nation's economy because within a short period, the country's economic situation worsened.

The prime minister said that the government later changed its economic recovery strategy which was eventually acknowledged as the best way to generate the country's economic growth.

Dr Mahathir, who spoke for an hour, also related his experience under the British, Japanese and Siamese rule.

He said that he truly understood life when dominated by others and it meant acute humiliation.

"That is why I appreciate independence more than people who have never been colonised. Independence is meaningless if there is no change for the better," he said.

The prime minister said that after independence, the government focused on efforts to expand educational institutions by providing educational opportunities to all the races especially the Malays on realising that the

level of progress of the various races in the country was not the same.

He said that command of knowledge was vital as it enabled races lagging behind to catch up.

In this respect, Dr Mahathir advised students especially Bumiputeras to make full use of the institutions and educational opportunities provided them so that they could keep up with the other races.

That was why, he said, the government was prepared to spend large sums of money to set up universities in the country and if compared to universities in countries which attained independence at the same time as Malaysia, the local universities were far better.

He said that the government not only allocated scholarships but also subsidised all students of higher learning institutions.

The fees paid were only one-tenth of the expenses at the universities and this showed that the government was prepared to provide subsidy to university students irrespective of their race, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that students should concentrate on acquiring knowledge in efforts to make Malaysia a developed nation.

"If we have adequate knowledge, it will not only help develop the nation but we will surely be respected by others," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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