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`US bid to recruit 12 as CIA agents'

MALACCA, Sun. - Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman today warned of efforts by the United States to recruit 12 Malaysians as Central Intelligence Agency agents to infiltrate Umno at the grassroots level in a move to disrupt unity.

He said Umno should be careful of such elements as the colonial powers in the past used the same method to weaken a country.

"This was practised by the Dutch when they wanted to colonise Indonesia. The Americans did this to weaken the ruling Liberal Democratic Party in Japan and also the Congress Party of India.

"Now they are doing the same thing to Malaysia as they recognise that to weaken the country and its leadership, they have to do so by appointing agents who can infiltrate Umno at the grassroots level."

He warned that such agents might be difficult to distinguish as they might practise "our way and follow us but they are aligned to the West".

Abdul Hamid, who is also party supreme council member, said the US was doing this to influence the economy and affairs of Malaysia, especially when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was critical of its policies.

He said this to reporters after launching the Selandar Umno delegates conference at Dewan Hang Kasturi, Selandar, today.

The Minister said the strength of Islam and Umno depended on the unity of its members and therefore, they should work for stability.

Abdul Hamid also warned of certain elements, namely university lecturers, writers, missionaries (pendakwah) and people from a non-governmental organisation who were out to poison the minds of the younger generation by twisting the facts about Islam and calling for Western type democracy and freedom.

"These people could be religious scholars who have stayed abroad for so long and adopted the Western ideals of freedom, human rights and democracy and they may have poisoned our younger generation's minds.

"We have to accept the fact that such ideals are not suitable here as we have our own ways and therefore, we can't totally adopt their style," he said.

In Johor Baru, Barisan Nasional secretary-general Datuk Seri Mohamed Rahmat said the coalition was aware of a conspiracy by opposition parties to enlist foreign help to discredit and bring down Dr Mahathir.

The Opposition, according to him, had taken its cause overseas and was actively lobbying for support from foreign powers.

"These people have no nationalistic goals, but their entire political struggle is aimed at bringing down individuals in the Government. And they are even willing to collude with foreign powers to achieve their aim. "But the people are no fools. They know the Opposition only wants to play on their emotions. They have begun to reject such campaigns," he told reporters after chairing the Umno Pulai division meeting here today.

Mohamed, who is also Information Minister and Member of Parliament for Pulai, echoed the views of Dr Mahathir, who yesterday urged the people not to fall prey to instigations.

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