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Mahathir-Holy War

JIHAD BUILDS COUNTRY'S CAPACITY TO HELP OTHER ISLAMIC NATIONS

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 3 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the ulama should appreciate the true concept of the jihad (holy way) which is to build a country's strength to be just as strong and developed as the developed nations so as to uphold the dignity of Islam and help other Islamic countries.

The prime minister said the true jihad was to make preparations so that the Muslims were really strong and able to defend themselves.

"For this, we need a peaceful country, (that is) well administered, able to accumulate money, has institutions of higher learning so that all the knowledge is mastered by the Muslims," he said when opening the 5th Malaysian Ulama Meeting, here.

Stressing that Malaysia was not ambitious to be a world power, he said that it nevertheless realised that it had to be developed to be able to help the other Islamic countries, especially the oppressed.

He said that if the understanding of jihad was widely appreciated by the Muslims and put into practice, he believed that people would respect the Muslims and no longer oppress them, no matter where they were.

Dr Mahathir said that realising that there was no Islamic country that was a super power, Malaysia had done what it could and sent 1,500 troops to protect the Muslims in Bosnia although prior to that Malaysia did not know that there were Muslims in Europe.

"We could do it because we have some capability," he said, reminding the 130-odd ulama present of the importance of having Islamic countries as world powers.

He said that if there was an Islamic country of world power status that could invent its own war apparatus and produce sophisticated equipment which no one else had, the Muslims would not be oppressed.

"If they oppress, the Islamic nation that is a world power will act, threaten those who oppress the Muslims...but now there is no Islamic country that can be regarded as a world power," he said.

That was one of the reasons the Muslims were despised and Muslims, including children in Palestine, were indiscriminately killed, he added.

The prime minister said the world's perception of the Muslims now was that they were weak and helpless.

"If we don't work together to master the knowledge that can help us, they will continue with the oppression.

"I believe that we are at fault because there are things that we can do for the Muslims but we not only don't do it but instead we quarrel among ourselves over religious interpretations," he said.

He said it was important for the Muslims in Malaysia as well as the ulama to master all types of modern knowledge like engineering and information and communication technology besides religious knowledge.

"If we concentrate only on the differences in opinions and not on defending the Muslims, I think we have neglected the religious teachings," he said.

That was why it was important for the ulama in Malaysia to understand what was happening in the country, he said, adding that to wage a jihad did not mean killing people.

"Our jihad is towards developing the country so that it can at least defend the Muslims," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia wanted to be a model to other Islamic countries which were more capable so that they would understand that restoring the strength of the Islamic countries was part of the requirements of the religion.

"If we can show by example, I believe that the Islamic nations will work

to strengthen their countries and join forces to defend the Muslims," he said.

He said that in the information age, globalisation would change the strength of countries that were efficient in using information, ensure that they continued to conquer the world as was the intention of the former colonial masters.

With information technology, the possibility of their re-colonising the Islamic nations was very real, he said.

The four-day meeting which started yesterday will discuss four working papers including one by renowned ulama Prof Dr M.A Zaki Badawi, Dean of the London Muslim College, who was involved in the setting up of the Klang Islamic College.

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