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Syed Hamid-Students

MEETINGS WITH STUDENTS SHOULD BE REGULAR FEATURE, SAYS SYED HAMID

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 31 (Bernama) -- Government leaders should regularly meet with Malaysian students whenever going on visits overseas to explain to them the latest development in the country, said Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar today.

He said such opportunities should be utilised to correct any misconception and counter the feeling of hatred against government leaders and the country including the lies spread by the opposition.

"Thus, it is important for government leaders to make it a habit to meet with our students abroad to explain the real situation in the country," he told reporters after a meeting with the Cuban President's special envoy, Miguel Ramirez Ramos who called on him at Wisma Putra, here.

Syed Hamid said the Foreign Ministry was always willing to arrange for meetings between cabinet ministers and Malaysian students abroad.

He was commenting on the statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in London last night that the culture of being ungrateful and instilling the feeling of hatred against certain people would destroy society.

Syed Hamid said the opposition and some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were active in getting themselves closer to the students abroad hoping that these students would support their cause upon returning to Malaysia.

"They are painting a negative picture about Malaysia and producing facts to create (certain) perception aimed at instilling hatred against national leaders who are said to be abusing power and indulging in corruption," he said.

The strategy to instil hatred was being employed at great length particularly during the election with the objective of toppling the government in power, he said.

Syed Hamid said government leaders should interact with students by answering intelligently all questions posed to them.

He cited his meeting with more than 1,000 Malaysian students during his visit to Egypt recently where the influence of the opposition could be seen in the kinds of questions posed by the students.

"In Egypt, I found out that at least they were willing to listen to our views and did not just walk out of the room.

"They are interested to know (about developments in the country) and our duty is to try to explain, to rationalise with them. They want to feel that they are equally important. You can't sidestep whatever issues brought up," he added.

He conceded that not all students were anti-government.

-- BERNAMA

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