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Mahathir-Globalisation

THINK CAREFULLY BEFORE TAKING GLOBALISATION PLUNGE, SAYS MAHATHIR

By: Muin Abdul Majid

DOHA (Qatar), Nov 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has warned that all Muslim and developing countries will become a part of the empire of North Atlantic countries if globalisation as presently conceived goes through.

"We can see how it is going to lead to their rebuilding their World Empire. The developing countries of the world will pay a high price if they swallow European ideas unthinkingly," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at a gathering of Muslim intellectuals and scholars at the Diplomatic Club here Saturday night on the eve of the opening of the ninth Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit.

He said globalisation, as presented today, was an invention of the North Atlantic countries meant to enrich them further and enhance their domination of the world.

Prior to that, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar launched the Arabic version of the book "New Deal For Asia" penned by the prime minister.

Noting that the current form of globalisation posed a threat against Muslims and the religion of Islam, Dr Mahathir said Muslims would lose in a global nation if they insisted on remaining spectators.

However, he said globalisation could be made to work for the Muslim community provided that it was properly understood.

He said: "If we know enough about these wheelings and dealings, we may be able to play the same game, by our own rules. We may even be able to enter as a virus into their systems to paralyse or frustrate them.

"They are big but size alone will not guarantee failures will not occur. They can fail. They can lose trillions of dollars. And they can destroy themselves."

Dr Mahathir also said there was the possibility that the Muslim community would miss the Information Age, no thanks to their squabbles over religion and politics.

He said this should not be the case as Muslim countries had the capacity to participate in the development of information technology (IT) and its innumerable applications.

"We are seeing the Information Age dawning upon the world. And it looks like we are going to miss this revolution too. We are still too busy with our squabbles over our religion and politics," he said.

He related how the Muslim community missed the earlier industrial revolution taking place in the European world which led them to be dependent on others even for the most simple needs.

Dr Mahathir said Muslim countries should ensure the development of the ummah by empowering them with information technology (IT) to enable them to handle the challenges of the Information Age and globalisation.

Describing this as the real "jihad", the prime minister said he believed that Islamic countries had the talents and the capacity to ensure its success.

At the question and answer session later, Dr Mahathir said there was no reason for the Muslim community not to have a different interpretation of globalisation which could be beneficial to them.

He said as far as Malaysia was concerned, the most important thing was to build up its strength with skills and knowledge to face the globalisation phenomenon.

"The best thing the Muslims can do is to acquire all skills and knowledge. We are not stupid. If we use all our assets that we have, we also can build up our strength. If you are strong, people will respect you," he said.

To a question, Dr Mahathir said more and more people were now against globalisation and that it was a good idea to form an organisation against it.

The problem was that many countries would not be able to support it openly due to various reasons such as having borrowed money from international financial institutions, he said.

Dr Mahathir also said religious values were equally important as shown by how Islam managed to turn backward Arabs into powerful people capable of spreading the faith from Spain to China.

On another matter, he said Malaysia was willing to share its experience in whatever fields with Arab countries, including how it successfully handled the economic crisis without having to turn to the International Monetary Fund as did other countries in similar predicament.

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