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Mahathir-India

INDIA-PAKISTAN NEED TO RESOLVE PROBLEM THROUGH NEGOTIATION

PUTRAJAYA, Dec 28 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said India and Pakistan should resolve whatever problems they may have through negotiations.

"As two neighbouring countries, they should sit down and talk," he told Bernama at his office, here today.

Dr Mahathir said he was against the use of military action to resolve any problem.

India and Pakistan have traded tit-for-tat sanctions beginning yesterday with both sides imposing diplomatic and air overflight sanctions on one another.

There has been increasing tension between the nuclear rivals since a bloody Dec 13 attack on India's parliament.

India blames two Pakistani-based Islamic militant organisations and insists that Pakistan cracks down on both groups and their leaders.

Pakistan, however, has put the leader of Jaish-e-Mohammad, one of the two groups India blames for the attack on Parliament, under house arrest. It has frozen funds of the other, Lashkar-e-Taiba.

"I don't like the use of military force to resolve any problem, as two neighbouring countries with (diplomatic) ties, they should sit down and discuss the matter," he said.

Dr Mahathir said what was happening to India was not on the instruction of the Pakistani government but it was done "probably by the people of Pakistan who acted by themselves."

"This is also the case in Palestine, it is not the Palestinian government that is committing the violence but the extremist groups.

"What would happen to Malaysia if terrorists from here attack another country...then we would have to go to war with that country," he said.

If this happened then many countries would be attacked and the world would be in chaos, he said.

"In the Taliban army there were people from Sudan, Libya, Somalia... would the western military force attack these countries because of the action of their irresponsible nationals," he said.

Speaking on another matter, Dr Mahathir reiterated Malaysia's stand that the country would not give protection to former Governor of the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao, Nur Misuari.

He said it was not easy to give protection to Nur Misuari because Malaysia had repeatedly made statements that it would not protect anyone who advocated terrorism anywhere.

"He should not run off to Malaysia...he should have gone to other countries, we have issued statements and we must stick to it, otherwise people will not trust us," he said.

He said this when asked to comment on the statement by Nur Misuari's wife, Tarhata Ibrahim who was allowed to visit the former governor at Bukit Aman yesterday.

After meeting with Misuari, Tarhata said her husband had sought the goodwill of the Malaysian government to give him protection from being sent back to the Philippines.

Nur Misuari was detained at Pulau Jampiras, Sabah, on Nov 24 for attempting to enter Malaysia illegally from southern Philippines following his unsuccessful revolution against Manila.

Dr Mahathir also said if a terrorist from Malaysia later fled to the

Philippines "how would we feel if the Philippines gave protection to the Malaysian terrorist."

He said Malaysia had her own responsibility to her neighbours and it was not Malaysia's wish to see Nur Misuari being sent back to the Philippines.

In fact, he added, Malaysia had helped Nur Misuari to become governor but after becoming governor, he declared war on the Philippine government.

"It was not just a declaration, action had also been taken and many people had died. If we are seen to take the matter that is occurring in a neighbouring country lightly, we may one day face the same problem," he added.

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