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Media-Muslims

MALAYSIA IS A VERY DEVELOPED ISLAMIC COUNTRY- US PUBLISHER

By: Nin Zarani Mohd Ali

PUTRAJAYA, Nov 16 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is a very developed Islamic country which has seen tremendous progress, Osama Siblani, the publisher of the United States based "The Arab American News" said today.

Osama of Dearborn, Michigan, said he was pleasantly surprised to see that Malaysia was a very developed country, unlike what had been portrayed by the western media.

"When we came here we were shocked and then realised how much Malaysia has being negatively portrayed by the western media," he told Bernama after he and a group of editors met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Prime Minister's Office here.

The group which includes editors of various Islamic newspapers and magazines from the US, the United Kingdom, Germany, Egypt, Oman, Libya, Sudan and Pakistan arrived here on Nov 11. They are leaving tomorrow.

Asked about their meeting with Dr Mahathir, he said the group needed to hear from the Prime Minister himself, his opinion on what was happening around the world, especially the things that had happened in Afghanistan and Palestine.

Osama said the group also wanted to know Dr Mahathir's opinion on the world economy and "how Malaysia had managed to make its way" during the economic downturn.

"We want to know more about Malaysia which had generated so much attention around the world," he said.

He said Dr Mahathir had made very clear that his government and its people did not support terrorism.

The Prime Minister had also told the group about the biased reports by the American media against Malaysia.

Osama said the meeting with the Prime Minister was very frank and he noted that Dr Mahathir was a very humble man.

"Your Prime Minister is not known as much as he should be. He is a dedicated person. A country like Malaysia cannot make such progress without having a leader like him," he said.

"He is a prudent leader and a humble one and may be what we need to do is to clone him... we need Dr Mahathir in other Muslim nations too and even in the West."

"He is a world leader that needs to be promoted... his ideas are right on the spot and we need to make sure that the world understands who Dr Mahathir Mohamad is and we will do our part in that regard," he added.

When asked about his name which was similar to Osama Bin Laden, the most wanted man in the US, he said he was a known man in the US as he appeared many times on US television networks.

"I have been on TV a lot and I have been asked about it and picked on by the media...because of my name...but I defended my name. Osama is the name of one of the Prophet Muhammad's generals and in Arabic, it's the name of a lion."

"I am proud of my name," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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