

05 NOV 2001

Mahathir-Terrorism

MALAYSIA STATES ITS STAND ON TERRORISM AT ASEAN LEADERS' SUMMIT

By: Chelliah

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Nov 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad reiterated Malaysia's stand on terrorism and the United States-led retaliatory strikes on Afghanistan at the Seventh Asean Leaders' Summit here today.

He proposed an Asean-level seminar on terrorism and believed that it would eventually lead to an international conference on terrorism.

Dr Mahathir said he also mentioned to the Asean leaders that the air strikes on Afghanistan resulted in civilian casualties and such action had caused anger among Muslims.

Speaking at a media conference at the end of the first day of the summit, the Prime Minister said Malaysia also emphasised that the US attacks on Afghanistan would not help in the fight against terrorism simply because not all the terrorists were in Afghanistan.

Asked about the call by Malaysia and Indonesia for the US to halt bombings in Afghanistan which was not reflected in the Asean declaration on terrorism, he said that others in Asean did not express strong views on the call.

However, Dr Mahathir said the proposal on the Asean seminar on terrorism would be included in the summit chairman's statement.

He said Malaysia also suggested at the summit that the effective way to combat terrorism was to seek the root causes of terrorism and try to eliminate them so that people would be less attracted to terrorism.

"It is difficult to locate and kill them (terrorists) by rocketing from a distance or carpet bombings. This coalition (US and its allies) against terrorism should cover all terrorists, even in Southeast Asia," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the world was unhappy over the number of civilian casualties especially the children and so far there was no evidence of Taliban forces or members of the Al-Qeada network killed or captured.

"War against Afghanistan is not going to be effective as civilians are killed," he said.

Asean comprises Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

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