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Mahathir-conference

MOST WORLD LEADERS AGREE TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TERRORISM

By: Mohd Kamel Othman & Ridzuan Zulkifli

SHANGHAI, Oct 20 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that most of the world leaders he met in conjunction with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) here agreed to having an international conference on terrorism.

"Most of them feel that such a conference should be held," he told Malaysian journalists here today.

Dr Mahathir, who had proposed such a conference to discuss the question of terrorism, said that although he did not stress on it the majority of the world leaders felt it was necessary in the fight against terrorism.

Today, the prime minister held bilateral discussions with U.S. President George W. Bush, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Mexican President Vicente Fox.

He is expected to hold a bilateral meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Monday.

"I gave as an example the Irish Republican Army (IRA) which the British government regards as terrorists but not by the United States," he said.

In fact, Dr Mahathir said many Americans of Irish origin supported the IRA.

"So, we want to know who are `terrorists' so the world could take action against them," he said.

Asked on his discussions with Jiang, Dr Mahathir said the Chinese president only wanted to hear his view on terrorism and that he had explained to him Malaysia's stand.

On his discussions with Putin, he said they also discussed the same issue and the need to identify the root cause of terrorism.

He said Putin also expressed sympathy Palestine President Yasser Arafat and the Palestinians but was cautious on the solution to the problem in West Asia as Russian Jews made up about one third of the Israel's population.

-- BERNAMA

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