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Mahathir-Globalization

MUSLIM COUNTRIES SHOULD ACT IN CONCERT TO SHAPE GLOBALIZATION, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, June 11 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that Muslim countries should act in concert in the shaping of globalization so that it can benefit them and the rest of the world.

He said Muslims could not reject globalization outright but could influence its interpretation, regulate it, change its base and reshape it.

"Globalization need not mean a borderless world. The borders could still be there and should be respected," he told participants of an international seminar on "The Impact of Globalization on the Islamic World: Issues and Challenges in the 21st Century" here.

He said information in all forms could cross borders unrestricted because of modern technology.

However, Dr Mahathir said Muslims could develop the software and even hardware which could keep out at least some of the dirt which come with the information.

He said Muslims must remember that they had missed the Industrial Revolution completely because they were busy debating whether modernization was compatible with Islam or not.

"While they were condemning each other over trivia regarding science and religion, while they considered for years whether electricity could be used in mosques or not, the Europeans were busy applying their new knowledge of things mechanical, of engineering, of reducing human labour with machines," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Muslims were now again being left behind in the Information Revolution which would shrink the world and force Muslims to be rubbing shoulders with all kinds of people whom were not only of different religions but possessing new moral values.

He said it was not possible for Muslims to isolate themselves as in the past because the invasions of the Muslim world was already on and became even more pervasive.

"Now we have globalization, a world without borders. Can we keep out things if we have no borders? Spy planes and satellites look down at us and see everything that we do. There is no more privacy and Muslims are very private people," he said.

The prime minister said the advocates of globalization were furiously preparing themselves to take advantage of a borderless world market.

They came together with giant banks and corporations, acquiring and mergering, getting bigger than most countries and even could buy up countries if they want to, he said.

"They are truly powerful and very influential. Reducing investments, pulling out capital, devaluing currencies, pressuring governments to change and to legislate in their favour and a host of other things can be done by these giants which will be good for them but not necessarily good for the country in which they operate or in the world at large," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Muslims could be invaded by ideas and values and moral codes that were alien to them, with the same effect as military invasion.

"In fact, it is worse than that as every aspect of our lives will be invaded. Our minds will be invaded. Even our religion will be invaded," he said.

Dr Mahathir said unfortunately, there were many Muslims in most Muslim countries who would not do anything to save themselves but actively try to

prevent other Muslims from taking pre-emptive action by violently opposing it.

Whether it was strange or not, every time Muslim countries try to take positive measures to keep up with development with the rest of the world and to prevent themselves from being dominated by others, there would be groups of Muslim fanatics doing their best to keep Muslims backward and vulnerable in the name of Islam, he said.

He reminded that Muslim countries and Muslim governments have a duty to ensure that globalization would not result in the marginalisation of their countries as happened with the Industrial Revolution and Industrial Age.

"We cannot afford it this time. If once we miss the opportunity to keep pace with the radical and rapid advances now being made with technology and the sciences, the changes they cause to the world's perceptions of things, the new ideas and concept in human and international relations; if we miss all these and fail to handle them then we will not only be marginalised, but we will be dominated and hegemonised permanently," he said.

The prime minister said Muslims have to accept and practise alien ideologies, concepts and values, and try to understand globalization.

"Understanding this, we must prepare ourselves not only to fend off dangers but to make use of globalization so as to catch up with the developed countries in both information technology and industrial capacity," he added.

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