

22 OCT 2001

Nik Aziz-Mahathir

NIK AZIZ BACKS DR MAHATHIR'S APEC STATEMENT ON PALESTINE

JELI, Oct 22 (Bernama) -- Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said he supported last weekend's call by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Shanghai APEC leaders' summit that the United States settle the Palestine issue first before mounting a global war against terrorism.

"I concur with the Prime Minister for his correctness in this matter," Nik Aziz said when approached by reporters after launching a state-level reading campaign at the public library here today.

During bilateral talks US President George W Bush in Shanghai, Dr Mahathir stressed that there would be no end to international terrorism as long as there was no settlement to the West Asian crisis.

Dr Mahathir had said that tackling the Palestine issue would defuse the frustrations and anger of Muslims.

Nik Aziz, who is also PAS' spiritual leader, said the US should first undergo self-examination and in determining what made Muslims very furious with America, one of the root causes was bound to be the Palestine issue.

"No one gets angry at America for no reason. For people to ram hijacked jetliners into the World Trade Centre in New York must be very furious with America for creating problems to the Arabs and the Palestinians," he said.

The mention of Palestine not only referred to Arabs but also Muslims because one of Islam's holiest places, Jerusalem, is in Palestine, Nik Aziz said.

In his speech earlier, the menteri besar urged Kelantanese to spend money on books and read them rather than for the menfolk to chat away valuable time and for the womenfolk to spend so much on jewellery.

-- BERNAMA

RAR RYN