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Mahathir-Terrorists

US PLANNED STRIKES UNLIKELY TO SPREAD, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 4 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it is unlikely that the United States will attack some Islamic countries Washington accuses of harbouring terrorists other than Afghanistan where Osama bin Laden is reportedly hiding.

"No, I don't think the US is going to do such a thing because that will mean that the US will be fighting against the whole Muslim world.

"And it has said that this is not a war against Islam, it's a war against terrorists," he told reporters after opening the CEO Summit 2001 here, today.

He was asked to comment on reports that the US did not rule out raids on terrorist targets in other Muslim countries beside its efforts to nab Osama, the man suspected of masterminding the deadly attacks on New York and Washington on Sept 11.

Dr Mahathir said although the Taliban rulers of Afghanistan might be harbouring terrorists, the people who actually perpetrated the attacks might not even be Afghans or were in Afghanistan.

"They do not appear to be Afghans. According to reports that we've seen, they seem to be Arabs living in the US. So technically speaking, do you define the US as harbouring terrorists? Certainly not. You do not know who they are or where they are," he said.

On his phone conversation with Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, Dr Mahathir said there was not much difference regarding the stand of the two countries vis-a-vis terrorism.

"We are all for hunting down the terrorists, we are against war and we think terrorism can only be defeated by attending to its causes," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this was in the context of the the Iranian leader's call that the Muslim world take a united stand on terrorism at the upcoming Organisation of Islamic Conference foreign ministers meeting in Qatar.

-- BERNAMA

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