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Mahathir-Bush

REPUBLICAN VICTORY MAY INCREASE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN US AND ISLAM,
SAYS PM

PUTRAJAYA, Nov 7 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed fear of increased confrontation between the United States and Islam as a result of the Republican victory in the US midterm elections and the growing popularity of Islamic parties worldwide.

He said that President George W. Bush's Republican party's victory was a vote of confidence in his on-going policies including those affecting the Muslim world.

"I suppose the election is a vote of confidence in the policies followed by President Bush," he told reporters after launching Proton's new models -- Proton Waja 1.8 and Proton Arena 1.5 at Dataran Putra here.

At the same time, Dr Mahathir said that in the Muslim world, Islamic parties were also becoming popular and this would only mean increasing confrontation between the two.

"Both sides are going to play up their anger and hatred to the maximum, so we are going to see a world which is not going to be very calm," he said.

Yesterday, Republicans took control of the Senate, retained control of the House of Representatives and claimed a majority of the governorships.

Islamic parties that have made sudden gains in recent elections were in Pakistan, Turkey, Bahrain and Morocco, with the Justice and Development Party voted into power in Turkey.

Dr Mahathir said that Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, who was supposed to have engineered the attack on the World Trade Centre, had succeeded beyond his dreams.

"He has made the whole world frightened. Now people are frightened to do anything, he has succeeded.

"And why he has succeeded is because we are angry. We do not know how to manage these things and we fell into his trap," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that most Americans were very angry for the first time in history.

-- BERNAMA

RZS AHH RM