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Aussie-Howard

AUSSIE MP SLAMS HOWARD OVER `RECKLESS' COMMENTS

MELBOURNE, Dec 8 (Bernama) -- Australian Prime Minister John Howard has been accused of believing white Anglo-Saxon culture is inherently superior to other cultures and for endangering Australia by recklessly alienating Asian neighbours.

Opposition Labour Party MP and former chief minister of Western Australia Dr Carmen Lawrence told "The Sunday Age" that Howard had a very old-fashioned idea of Western Christian superiority.

"I think he reeks of it. He wouldn't be talking the way he does unless he felt that we had a certain entitlement to behave in ways that no other country in the region does," she said.

"Part of Howard's make-up is that the white Anglo-Saxon culture is inherently superior to others and that the gifts we have are not accidents of history, they are by dint of our own hard work and diligence and anyone who doesn't have those things, whether it be individuals or countries, has really no one else but themselves to blame."

"Australians should consider how they would feel if Indonesia said it had the right to attack terrorists in Australia.

"He (Mr Howard) feels that he has the right somehow to make similar threats to people in the region without retaliation. Inherent in that is an insistence on your own superiority."

Howard had a colonial mentality rather than a racist one, Dr Lawrence said.

"It's more of the born to rule, rule Britannia stuff revisited. You can see from the way he behaves that he regards himself as inherently superior to these people."

She said Howard had allowed to gain currency the idea that Australia might send a missile into Jakarta if it thought there was a terrorist there. "He's allowed it to be imagined and a lot of people around the bars in bowling clubs think that's exactly what he's saying."

Howard's approach was potentially very hostile and ignored the fact that Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia had already had considerable success in dealing with terrorist threats, including some directed at Australia, she said.

Dr Lawrence said Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had worked very hard to contain fundamentalism in his own country.

"We're actually making it harder for people in the region who've been struggling with this for a very long time. It's part of our shame in a way."

-- BERNAMA

NDC SM YBY