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Mahathir-Israel

SETTLEMENT OF WEST ASIA ISSUE DEPENDS ON BIG POWERS, SAYS DR M

By: S.Retnanathan

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 1 (Bernama) -- Any settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict depends on the major powers of the world, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"As long as the major powers give face to Israel, there will be no settlement," he said in the programme "Wawancara BERNAMA dengan Perdana Menteri" aired over RTM and Astro tonight.

Dr Mahathir said he had been following the developments in Palestine since the formation of the state of Israel when the big powers took the territory of the Palestinian Arabs and gave it to the Jews.

"They (major powers) seemed insensitive to the feelings of Muslims. They took the territory of Muslims and gave it to other people because they felt guilty for killing six million Jews during the war previously, to cleanse themselves of the sin," he said.

Dr Mahathir said although the Palestinians accepted and recognised Israel, the Israelis did not want to recognise the state of Palestine.

"This caused strong enmity between the Palestinians who are supported by other Muslims and Israel which is supported by big powers, and a settlement could not be achieved as long as Israeli territory is not determined," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that till today Israel's borders had not been determined and this meant the settlement could not be achieved.

On Israeli aggression against the Palestinians, he said that as long as the major powers did not rein in or stop Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who was responsible for killing many Muslims in Lebanon, terrorism would continue to be committed in West Asia.

"At the same time we should also remember that the attacks by Hamas (against Israel) do not help the Palestinians. These are wanton attacks that do not at all help in achieving the Palestinian objective," he said.

On the Asean-level international conference on terrorism to be held in Malaysia soon, Dr Mahathir said it was important because at the moment terrorism was linked to the Sept 11 incident, whereas even before that many acts of terror had been committed by various types of people.

"There are many more terrorist groups, including Jewish ones. So, if we want to fight terrorists, we fight all terrorists. But if we say terrorists are only Muslims, I think this is unfair.

"Why should Muslims not be given help when facing terrorism perpetrated by others while we help if other people are facing terrorists?" he said.

-- BERNAMA

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