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Mahathir-Japan

DO NOT HAVE NEGATIVE PERCEPTION OF MUSLIMS- DR MAHATHIR

By: Harlina Samson

TOKYO, Dec 13 (Bernama) -- As Japan enjoys cordial relations with superpower nations, especially the United States, it can play a role by correcting their negative perception of Muslims and Islam, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said Japan also had a very good role to play in correcting the imbalances in the world, easing the anger of Muslims and non-Muslims and persuading their allies to solve the problem of oppression of Muslims.

He said at present Japan was not a target of terror attacks.

"What we expect of Japan is to balance. You have no quarrel with the Arabs, you have no quarrel with the Jews, you have no quarrel with anybody but you have to be rational and figure out why these things are happening," he told participants of a symposium on Islam entitled "Islam: Fostering Peace and Dialogue in an Interdependent World," at the United Nations University here.

He was asked during a dialogue that followed as to what he expected from Japan and the role it could play in combating terrorism and promoting dialogue between Muslims and Non-Muslims as the country has its own personality, culture and beliefs.

Dr Mahathir fielded a wide range of questions from his Japanese audience which was much interested in his views on regional and international matters, Islam, terrorism and civilisation.

The Prime Minister believed that every action taken could have a reason and the same thing was true of the Arabs, who were not terrorists before.

He said the Arabs, who were not terrorists before were today willing to commit suicide in order to fight against the Israelis or the Americans, because they felt that the Americans, Jews and Europeans had been unjust to them.

"So, if Japan can persuade your friends in Europe and in America that will be good thing. You may increase your security, you can increase your defences but these are not the total answer. You have to do that but at the same time you also have to solve the problem of the oppression of Muslims," he said.

To another question, Dr Mahathir said the world had progressed much faster than civilisation had progressed.

"Science has taken us very far ahead... new capabilities to do a lot of good as well as bad things but we are still relatively uncivilised," he said.

Humankind had not kept pace with human scientific capabilities and because of that there were tendencies for the strong to make use of their strength and majority to dominate.

Dr Mahathir gave an example and referred to the actions of the Australian Prime Minister John Howard who wanted to change international law to allow for pre-emptive strikes in other countries.

"If Australia suspects there are some people in Malaysia planning to carry out attacks on Australia then the country has the right to take action in Malaysia... at that rate no country is going to feel safe," he said.

This showed that the thinking did not keep up with the capabilities and with the new capabilities for carrying out assassination, one need not go near to the person to shoot but just use guided missiles or unmanned

aircraft.

"That is your capability but what are your moral values. If you do those things, your civilisation has not kept up with your capabilities. That is why you see today a very unfair world," he added.

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