

10/11/2002

Face enemies of Islam in triumph

Munir Majid

We Need Strong Muslim Leaders

THIS is not the way of peace. It is the way of subjugation, of war. It will continue to incite terror. It is not Muslim terror, but the terror of injustice wrought on Muslims.

The injustice must be addressed, first and foremost in Palestine. When the Americans move the Israelis on this, there will be progress in the war against terror.

Now more than ever before, the Muslims need leaders who are strong and sensible, like Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who can speak with authority with-out blood on their hands and point to peaceful achievement in a predominantly Muslim but multi-racial and multi-religious country.

Leaders who accord their own Muslim population the same kind of respect and regard they want others to accord them.

Leaders who have the intellect to argue that all the world has been doing since Sept 11 is to descend to the depths of brutality defined by the terrorists who attacked America, that perpetrator and victim have now become one in the art of scientific butchery.

Leaders who do not bend before the appeal of extremism in Islam, which indeed is an enemy of Islam, but instead cultivate strength from faith to build a worthwhile world among the followers of the religion.

Also leaders who will not bend against the pressure of external forces, but deflect or frustrate them, even if they do not have the power to confront them head-on.

Leaders who are able to think of a way out as Dr Mahathir did against IMF pressures to introduce austerity measures in 1998 which would have sunk the Malaysian economy.

(Strange how when Western economies are in trouble, interest rates are reduced, but when developing economies are in a pickle, they have to increase them!)

Most of all, leaders who are able to build and construct, who strive to develop alternatives, that can provide some kind of buffer for Muslim nations - such as by the setting up of the Islamic Financial Services Board, for which the Prime Minister and the Bank Negara Governor's leadership have to be recognised, to encourage the further development of the Islamic financial market.

We should have at least some custody and control of our incomes and savings instead of so easily surrendering them in American dollars to be managed and controlled by those who might wish to attack us.

This is not a turning of the back on the world, but striving to cultivate a little oasis in a hostile world. The distance we still have to go is re-flected by the size of the Islamic financial market - a puny US\$200 billion (RM760 billion), as stated by Dr Mahahtir during the inauguration of the IFSB - which is exceeded by the sum held in American dollars by just Abu Dhabi alone (US\$214 billion).

That is the distance we have to go in mind, body and money. This is the struggle Muslims have to join, in politics and in the economy. We have no alternative if we do not want the enemies of Islam to triumph.