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MAHATHIR-ISLAM

WESTERN POWERS NOT DOING ENOUGH TO WIN OVER MUSLIMS TO FIGHT TERRORISM

PULAU PANGKOR, Sept 8 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has hit out at Western superpowers for practically doing nothing to win the hearts and minds of Muslims but are instead bent on waging war against them (Muslims) in efforts to stamp out terrorism.

Describing this as wrong, he said "Everything is being done to alienate them (Muslims) further, to anger and frustrate them. This selfish move will only ensure that there will be a constant and probably increasing supply of recruits to terrorism."

The West had not cared to find out about the causes of terrorism and remove them while the faint voices protesting from among them were ignored, he said in his closing address at the end of the first ever Asian Global Leadership Forum, otherwise known as the Pangkor Retreat here.

It was attended by 200 participants, including captains of industry, ministers, academicians and economists. Also present was the prime minister's wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, and YTL Corporation Bhd group managing director Tan Sri Francis Yeoh who chaired the closing session on "Building and shaping prosperity: Giving a human dimension to globalisation."

Dr Mahathir said, "The powerful are bent on revenge rather than solutions. And so there will be no end to Muslim terrorism."

"The answer does not lie in confrontation, in force, in a war to end all wars. The answer lies in justice and fair play, in being sensitive, in being willing to step back and to admit mistakes and banish the idea that anyone race has a monopoly of the right values, the right systems and the right solutions to all the human ailments."

The prime minister said the world today lived in fear of Muslim terrorists and not other terrorists and because terrorists could not be easily identified or located, all Muslims were considered potential terrorists and were treated as such.

He said because the majority of Malaysians were Muslims, all Malaysians were being penalised in being denied visas, were checked and re-checked and were humiliated when they went to certain countries.

He said sanctions against Iraq, Iran Libya and Sudan -- all Muslim countries -- and more tragically the killings of the Palestinians made Muslims everywhere feel oppressed, angry, bitter and frustrated.

"They cannot go to war in the conventional way. They did that before against Israel but they were defeated, largely because Israel is backed by the great powers. The only way they (Muslims) can retaliate is through acts of terror, hitting out blindly at the innocent as well as the guilty."

Dr Mahathir said that if normalcy were to be restored on this planet, "the first thing that has to be done is to stop thinking of revenge, and begin to think of justice and fair play."

He said the arrogance of power must be eliminated. Until then, there would be no prosperity for the globalised world.

On globalisation, the prime minister said it has to be regulated, taking into consideration the weaknesses and sensitivities of the poor countries and to ensure that the benefits resulting from globalisation like foreign direct investments (FDIs) would benefit them.

"Total freedom of inflow and outflow of capital cannot be allowed," he said, adding that manipulation of the share and currency markets must be banned.

Malaysia, he said, was critical of globalisation because it had seen the damage done by the manipulation of share prices.

Dr Mahathir also reiterated his call for a world tax on infrastructure where the money could be used exclusively for building infrastructure facilities so much needed by developing countries in order for them to develop and make them more attractive to foreign investors.

He said while some countries managed to attract FDIs, many get nothing at all.

"It seems like the global village is the village of the rich with the poor having no share in it. It is apartheid indeed," he said. -- BERNAMA

MR SHY