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Najib-Palestine

POPE-DR M MEETING CAN CHANGE WORLD OPINION ON PALESTINE

PEKAN, June 8 (Bernama) -- Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today that yesterday's historic meeting between Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Pope John Paul II is expected to change world opinion on the Palestinian issue.

Najib said the international community had been viewing the Palestinian issue as merely a struggle of Muslims but this was expected to change following the meeting at the Vatican City.

The Pope had made a significant statement that peace in the Middle East could only be achieved if the Palestinians were given back their rights, he told reporters after meeting non-governmental organisations (NGOs) here.

"We hope the world will respond to this suggestion...both (the Pope and Dr Mahathir) are in agreement on this matter, and it is obvious that this is not an issue of Muslims' struggle but a struggle for humanity," he said.

Najib said it was a historic occasion for a Muslim leader and the Head of the Roman Catholic Church to meet and agree on the Palestinian issue.

In KUALA TERENGGANU, Cuepacs also hailed the meeting, saying it showed that Malaysia had been accepted as a voice of the Muslim world and people who love world peace.

"Malaysians regardless of their political beliefs should feel proud about the meeting because it is not easy for someone to meet the Pope, what more to do so at his invitation," Cuepacs president Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam said.

The people should give Dr Mahathir a hero's welcome on his return from his European trip, he told reporters after the opening of the Terengganu National Union of Teaching Profession general meeting.

He said Cuepacs also felt proud that Dr Mahathir would be delivering a keynote address at the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conference in Geneva on Tuesday.

-- BERNAMA

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