

23 MAY 2002

Mahathir-Terrorism

MALAYSIA WANTS SOUTH KOREA'S SUPPORT IN COMBATING TERRORISM

By: Amin Husaini Harun

SEOUL, May 23 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has reiterated its call for the convening of an international conference on terrorism so that a clear definition of terrorism can be decided.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that Malaysia hoped that South Korea could lend its voice and support for such a conference so that the subject could be discussed comprehensively to establish the best means to eliminate and resolve this terrible menace.

Describing the fight against terrorism as a major global concern, he stressed that the fight against terrorism "while remaining a priority for all, should not be expanded to include other agendas".

In his address at the state banquet hosted in his honour by President Kim Dae-Jung at The Blue House here tonight, Dr Mahathir said: "There is also an urgent need to have a clear definition of terrorism.

"This will enable us to distinguish between a genuine freedom fighter and the one who is motivated by a misplaced sense of injustice and grievances," he said.

On bilateral relations with South Korea, Dr Mahathir noted that both countries had succeeded in overcoming the 1997 economic and financial crisis with policy measures that were appropriate and suitable to their respective problems.

"As we have learnt from that episode, all countries in the East Asian region should work together and reform the international financial architecture to ensure that our economies can deal effectively with the challenges of globalisation and the volatile financial flows," he said.

The prime minister expressed his gratitude to the Korean government for the support of Malaysia's "Look East" policy and trust that Korea would continue to accept more Malaysians in her universities and institutions of higher learning.

He said that the policy, which started with Japan, was expanded to include Korea as the work ethics of the Korean people were values Malaysia desired to emulate in order to attain economic progress.

He said that since the implementation of the policy, 1,182 Malaysians have undergone training in various programmes in Korea, besides 500 students who pursued their studies at Korean institutions of higher learning under the technical training programme.

Dr Mahathir said: "The Look East policy therefore is a very important component of our relations with the Republic of Korea and these two programmes have served very well in our efforts to develop our human resources."

He said that Malaysia was committed to improving cordial ties with Korea which have grown steadily since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1960.

He said that Korea was at present Malaysia's eighth largest global trading partner and its ninth largest export market. Last year, Korea was the sixth largest foreign investor in the Malaysian manufacturing sector.

"The continuing political and economic stability of Malaysia, and to my government's commitment to providing a positive business environment for all investors without doubt makes Malaysia a most promising and suitable venue for your investments," he told Kim.

Dr Mahathir also congratulated Kim for his effort in trying to promote reconciliation with North Korea following his successful summit meeting

with his northern counterpart, Kim Jong-il, in June 2000.

-- BERNAMA

AHH RM