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Parliament-Islam

MALAYSIA AN ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST STATE- DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, June 17 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is not a moderate Islamic state but an Islamic Fundamentalist State as its policy is to abide by the fundamental teachings of Islam, the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said today.

The Prime Minister said that he had explained this to the leaders in the course of his visit to various Western countries.

"When I said this they were shocked because they considered a fundamentalist as someone who is violent and did all kinds of bad things but to me it is not."

"If we hold to the fundamentals of Islam, we will not become bad as Islam exhorts us to be on good brotherly terms, united, do good things and hence it is not wrong to be an Islamic Fundamentalist," he said when replying to Datuk Hadi Awang (PAS-Marang) during Question Time in the Dewan Rakyat.

Dr Mahathir said that about 15 years ago the Western Press when reporting about him said that the Malaysian Prime Minister was a fundamentalist and he was not ashamed when acknowledging himself as an Islamic Fundamentalist.

He said Malaysia's policy was to abide by the fundamental teachings of Islam.

The Prime Minister said when this was explained to them the West agreed that the use of the word "fundamentalist" by them all this while had been inaccurate.

Dr Mahathir said that he was glad that he was able to explain this to several non-Muslim leaders as many of them did not know about this although many had shown interest in wanting to know more about Islam after the Sept 11 attacks last year.

Replying to Dr Tan Seng Giaw (DAP-Kepong), Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was not only an Islamic state as acknowledged by other countries but also a model Islamic state.

There was no reason for the DAP to feel oppressed over statements about Malaysia being an Islamic state as the Federal Constitution (pertaining to Islam) had never been amended.

Meanwhile referring to the question of Palestine, Dr Mahathir said the West should be even handed in its policy.

"We are not saying that they should side with Palestine, no. If Israel is doing wrong they should say it is wrong and if the Palestinians are doing bad things, it should be said so. We should consider the matter in all fairness."

"If we do that and if we eliminate the causes for Muslims to resort to terror, God willing, even if terrorism cannot be wiped out altogether, at least it can be reduced. We should remember that non-Muslims are also terrorising," he said.

He said Malaysia had urged the United Nations to send an international peacekeeping force to separate the warring parties and to support the peace proposal initiated by Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia to end the conflict in the region.

"Unfortunately we see that the UN has clay feet, has no stand. When a team was bound for Jenin to ascertain if Israel had committed terrorism, Israel opposed the team. My friend Kofi Anan (UN Secretary-General) said it does not matter, they are not allowing it, so we will not go ahead."

"What then is the meaning of the UN. Collect a lot of money, hold meetings every year, engage in fiery oratory but this matter alone cannot be resolved. This is the problem. It (UN) looks big but does not have the capacity...everything depends on the superpower. There is no justice in the world at present. What exists is might is right. He who is strong will wield power."

Replying to Datuk Zulhasnan Rafique (BN-Wangsa Maju), Dr Mahathir said that during his visit to the United States between May 13 and 16, he strove to explain Malaysia's stand and correct the West's misconception about Islam and explain the reasons which bred terrorism.

He explained that there was terrorism in Palestine because Palestinian land had been seized to create Israel and because of the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory.

"Those opposing Israel are not just Muslims but also Arab Christians. However as the majority of the oppressed Palestinians are Muslims this has caused anger among other Muslims. They are resorting to suicidal attacks as they have no choice."

He said Malaysia would continue to urge the international community to call upon Israel to cease all military activities and withdraw fully from Palestinian territory.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia fully supported the comprehensive implementation of all UN resolutions that called for Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian territory and Arab land which it conquered during the 1967 Middle East War.

-- BERNAMA
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