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Mahathir-Terrorists

M'SIA BENT ON FIGHTING TERRORISTS, SAYS DR M

By: Zaharah Othman

LONDON, Feb 24 (Bernama) -- Malaysia disagrees with certain countries being accused as terrorist nations but instead wants efforts focused in fighting terrorists and not invading terrorist countries, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said on Saturday.

He said this was Malaysia's stand he would explain to his British counterpart Tony Blair in their meeting at No 10 Downing Street tomorrow.

"This is Malaysia's stand. I hope our actions will not arouse anger among Muslims," he told Malaysian journalists at the Hari Raya Aidiladha open house at the residence of Malaysia's High Commissioner to Malaysia Datuk Salim Hashim.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia's stand was clear in line with what was happening now in West Asia where Israeli encroachments into Palestinian territories are not regarded as acts of terror while retaliation by Palestinians are interpreted as violence.

"As such, if we want to accuse anybody as terrorists, we must define who are terrorists and what constitute to terrorism. Anybody committing violent actions must be branded as terrorists, regardless of whether it is a country or individuals," he said.

Asked whether accusations that Malaysia was a launch pad for terrorism activities had any basis, Dr Mahathir said indeed there were such allegations and Malaysia did not deny that some of its citizens who went to Pakistan and Afghanistan for further studies had plotted to topple the government by force.

"But there is no proof that they are directly involved in violence in other countries. If there are evidence, we are prepared to take action against them.

"In fact, we have already arrested those involved in plans to commit violence which we managed to detect," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said pursuant to his visits to Antarctica and Argentina, Malaysia might set up a scientific research centre in Antarctica to conduct studies on insects in the icy continent which were also found in Malaysia.

He said the presence of the insects in Antarctica was strange and as such, efforts must be made to study their existence scientifically.

"Although Malaysia is in a tropical zone, there is no reason why we cannot carry out researches in Antarctica," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he went to Antarctica to see the situation in the cold continent as "I need to know the situation there although it may seem it had nothing to do with Malaysia."

He said many countries had carried out research and Malaysia was following suit.

Several Malaysian scientists were conducting research using facilities of Australia and New Zealand.

Dr Mahathir said he also visited Argentina and held discussions with the president on cooperation in the research field.

Meanwhile, the prime minister celebrated Hari Raya Aidiladha with some 1,000 Malaysians of all races at the open house hosted by Salim.

Dr Mahathir and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali were swamped by guests to wish them Selamat Hari Raya Aidiladha and to take photograph with them.

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