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Mahathir-Iraq

WAR ON IRAQ SPELLS BLEAK FUTURE FOR THE WORLD, WARNS DR MAHATHIR

By: Harlina Samson

TOKYO, Dec 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has warned that an attack on Iraq may unleash the wrath of Muslims and spell a bleak future for the world.

"Frankly, I think it (the war against Iraq) is counter-productive, you may get oil but you will earn the hatred of 1.3 billion Muslims forever and that is going to be very counter-productive.

"I do hope that the war against Iraq does not take place but if it does, then you can be assured of a very bleak future for the world order," he said in an apparent reference to a notion that the war against Iraq is actually about control of oil resources.

Dr Mahathir said this during a question-and-answer session at a seminar commemorating the 20th anniversary of the 'Look East Policy' adopted by Malaysia, here. He arrived here today for a two-day official visit to Japan.

The Prime Minister said that the current world situation seemed to be fuelled by anger and this would be harmful for everybody.

He said that the world was not handling the terrorism issue properly and the future of the world would be very much affected by this anger which appeared to be on everybody's breast now.

"The anger of Americans of being attacked the way they have not been attacked before, and the anger of Muslims because they feel they have unjustly been condemned. So the future is not so good at the moment," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that in this current climate, people would not feel safe anywhere and remained fearful of travelling, what with travel advisories being slapped against certain countries.

"Japan says don't go to Australia. Australia says don't go to Malaysia and Malaysia is going to say, don't go to many countries.

"I might not come to Japan if I didn't trust Japan. So all these things are reaching a very silly point," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that the world could not fight terrorism by expanding military strength because it would not be known who and where the terrorist would strike, as proven in Mombasa, Kenya recently despite the great alert in the world.

He said that not knowing who or what they were, there is nothing that could stop such people from attacking their intended victims and people who were the target will be everywhere.

"If the Americans are the target, can the American people live in fortresses in America, without travelling anywhere. That is impossible, so how can we prevent these people from taking pot-shot on individual Americans travelling anywhere in the world?" he said.

Saying that the strategy taken to fight against terrorism was wrong, the Prime Minister stressed that in fighting against terrorism, one need to understand the root causes and eliminate them first.

To a question as to what was his observation on the United States' recent policy on the defence budget and the impact of such policy on Islam, he said that it was something that gave no return as it was not an investment that could benefit the economic growth of the people and the country.

Since the country has all the sophisticated weapons, then they would have the desire to make use of the weapons and create war and if it went on

spending big budget this way, it would become poor and because of its military strength, it will attack other countries to enrich itself, he said.

"The country is a superpower but what is the point because it will be like a tall, big, tough man or a sumo wrestler, the only way you can earn money is to fight another sumo wrestler but there is no more sumo wrestler, he is the only one, so whats the point anyway?" he said.

Asked on the pre-emptive attacks as announced by America and recently Australia by claiming that they have the right to go to any country supposedly to curb terrorism, Dr Mahathir said that what was there to stop other countries to also do the same thing without going to the United Nations.

"Supposedly, this law permits pre-emptive attack. What is going to happen to Malaysia if other countries want to make pre-emptive attack and what is going to happen if everybody wants to take pre-emptive attack and makes its own judgment.

"The world will be very crazy and there will be assasination, unmanned plane will be used to bomb and kill people and the world will be in a state of perpetual turmoil," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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