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LID-Mahathir (Strategy)

DR M: STRATEGY TO IDENTIFY ROOT CAUSES OF TERRORISM YET TO BE DRAWN

LANGKAWI, Aug 1 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says a strategy that takes into consideration the causes of terrorism has yet to be formulated in order to fight terrorism.

"We must eliminate the causes even if they are silly and unreasonable if we want to win the hearts and minds of the supporters and sympathisers and to prevail upon would be terrorists to cease and desist.

"I am afraid this is not being done," said the prime minister when opening the Global 2002 Langkawi International Dialogue 2002 at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre here tonight. Global 2002 also incorporates the Southern Africa International Dialogue and East Africa International Dialogue.

In fact, he said, the opposite was happening as terror attacks which were totally indiscriminate were being used to counter terrorism.

This had caused even more anger and desperation and more willingness on the part of the terrorists to reply in kind.

"The whole world, especially the world most likely to be attacked by terrorists is living in a state of fear, expending hundreds of billions of dollars in futile defence and in the process preventing economic recovery," he said.

Dr Mahathir said when the terrorists were prepared to kill themselves in carrying out their acts of terror, there was no way they could be prevented from doing that with any certainty.

Saying that the Sept 11 attacks had shocked the world, he said many who thought that terrorism was a problem of other countries now realised that no country was immuned from terror attacks.

"Everyone now finds a need to cooperate to tackle this problem.

"Unfortunately, we cannot agree on how to deal with terrorists and terrorism," he said.

"Some think that all that was needed was to declare war on terrorism and to mount a full military operation.

"Unfortunately fighting terrorists is not like fighting a conventional war or a civil war. In a conventional war, the enemy is a country or an alliance of countries or a definable group.

"With terrorism, there was no country which could be truly identified as the enemy," Dr Mahathir said.

In fact, the terrorists might be hiding anywhere, or even be among the people of the country which was fighting against terrorism, he said.

Many of the terrorists might be killed or arrested but there was no guarantee there would be no more still around or new recruits deterred, he added.

-- BERNAMA

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