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Mahathir-Terrorists

THE US ITSELF SHOULD HAVE NABBED SEPT 11 TERRORISTS, SAYS DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 7 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the United States itself could have prevented last year's Sept 11 attacks on New York and Washington since the suspected perpetrators were residing in the US for almost a year prior to the incident.

The planning for the attacks on New York and Washington could have been done in the US itself, the Prime Minister said, dismissing suggestions that the attacks could have been avoided had Malaysia intercepted and arrested two of the suspects involved when they were reportedly in Malaysia early last year.

In fact, the suspects had also stayed in Switzerland but the Swiss government too did not take any action against them then, he said at a news conference after addressing the third public service premier assembly here today.

Dr Mahathir said that if the US and Switzerland themselves did not identify such people as terrorists and did not act against them henceforth, "how are we (Malaysia) to detain them."

He was commenting on last week's report carried by Singapore's Malay-language Berita Harian quoting Jane's Intelligence Review that the Sept 11 attacks could have been prevented had Malaysia arrested the duo when they were reportedly in Malaysia in January last year.

Dr Mahathir also said he was saddened by the reported arrest of eight undergraduates in Kangar for allegedly spying on Barisan Nasional preparations for this month's Indera Kayangan by-election in Perlis for the opposition.

"I am sad because we have been advising students not to be involved in politics, what more in political intrusions such as this.

"They fully well know that what they are doing is wrong and should not get themselves involved," he said.

The students aged between 20 and 23, including female undergraduates, were from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Universiti Institut Teknologi Tun Hussein Onn and Universiti Sains Malaysia.

The by-election, slated for Jan 19, is to fill in the vacancy left following the death of the Barisan Nasional assemblyman Datuk Khor Liang Tee last month.

Nomination has been fixed for Thursday.

Dr Mahathir also announced that the government would issue a white paper on the Al-Ma'unah group soon and explained that the delay in coming out with it was due to then on-going court case against them.

Since the Al-Ma'unah members have already been convicted and sentenced for waging war against the King, production of the white paper was underway, he said.

"The problem before is that we may be in contempt of court," he said while acknowledging that he could not know whether the government would be able to convince PAS on this Al-Ma'unah issue even after it coming out with the white paper.

He said: "Even when we hang these people (Al-Ma'unah leader Mohamed Amin Mohamed Razali who was sentenced to death alongside two henchmen), PAS is bound to say that the hanging is sandiwara (play-acting) and that the trio are not actually dead."

The High Court here last week found 19 Al-Ma'unah members guilty of waging war against the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

Amin and his two henchmen were sentenced to death, while 16 others were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Earlier, 10 other members of the group pleaded guilty to the charge and were sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment.

During the trial the court was told that they group staged arms heists at two army camps in Grik before hiding and taking hostages at a durian orchard in Bukit Jenalik, Sauk in July last year.

During the stand-off with security forces, they killed two the hostages, a policeman and a soldier. An Al-Ma'unah member was also killed.

-- BERNAMA

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