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Mahathir-Australia

WE'LL REGARD AS AN ACT OF WAR IF AUSTRALIA INTRUDES INTO M'SIA - DR M

PUTRAJAYA, Dec 2 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will consider it an act of war if Australia intrudes into this country to fight terrorism, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"We will hold this as an attempt to wage war against the government and the country if Australia pursues its intention to attack any country to tackle terrorism," the Prime Minister said.

"If they used rockets or pilotless aircraft to carry out assassination, then we will consider this as an act of war and we will take action according to our laws to protect the sovereignty and independence of our country," he said.

As an independent nation, Malaysia would not allow anyone to impose their laws on this country, he said when commenting on the statement by Australian Prime Minister John Howard that he was prepared to act against terrorists in neighbouring Asian countries.

Howard had said international law and the UN Charter should be amended to empower nations to strike pre-emptively against terrorists who planned to attack them.

"If they enter without permission, then we will consider this an infiltration by a foreign power and we will take action according to our country's laws," he told a media conference before breaking fast with cabinet ministers, deputy ministers, parliamentary secretaries and senior government officials at his official residence "Seri Perdana" here.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia remained opposed to attempts by any country to intrude into independent countries to enforce the former's laws.

"It will definitely cause the situation to worsen. We feel this is not the way to fight terrorism," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Howard's statement not only disappointed him but was also arrogant.

He also said Australia stood like a sore thumb trying to impose its European values on Asia.

-- BERNAMA

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