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Mahathir-Iraq

M'SIA REMAINS STEADFAST AGAINST WAR IN IRAQ, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 15 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said in remarks published in the Al-Ahram newspaper that Malaysia remains steadfast in its view to oppose the U.S. campaign to attack Iraq because the reason given was not convincing and could not be accepted.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia could not accept the reason of the U.S. of just wanting to kill and remove president Saddam Hussein without consideration for the people of Iraq.

There must be a reason for war and the reason must be convincing and in accordance with the law, not waking up one morning and then decided to go to war, he was quoted by the Egyptian newspaper in an interview recently.

He said Malaysia is saddened not because it happens to another Islamic country but also because the Iraqis too rejected war and wanted peace and security.

Dr Mahathir said it is necessary for the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to play its role to avoid war and guarantee peace, especially the people in Islamic countries which had adopted an uncompromising stance against war.

"So, Islamic governments should not keep quiet. We must take steps," he said.

On the use of oil as a weapon to stop war and the genocide of the Palestine people, Dr Mahathir said Islamic countries should think of ways to do it.

This is because oil producing countries have their own interest in wanting to sell the commodity, he said.

"When we cannot evaluate, this matter will become a problem very dangerous especially to the other party. United States views this (oil for war) as a hostile act," he said.

Dr Mahathir said: "Another important reason is that oil producing countries are American allies."

On the role of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), currently being chaired by Malaysia, he said NAM is still relevant because of its noble policies and principles but NAM members must pool energy and resources to achieve the objective of NAM.

"At present NAM members have no unified foreign policy, each going their separate ways," he said.

Dr Mahathir also expressed regrets over the coverage of the American media.

"They came to our country, heard and saw for themselves all that were going on but reported differently. They did not report the truth...they said I am a dictator when they are fully aware of the style of political leadership in my country, in fact frequently seeing me driving by myself and walking in public without bodyguards."

Dr Mahathir was also glad that Malaysia is now a model to other Islamic countries.

He said Malaysia had proven to the world that its people of various could live in peace and harmony.

A way of life based on justice and equality irrespective of race and skin colour had enabled all races to realise progress in various aspects, he said.

The Prime Minister said it is on this foundation that Malaysia has been able to develop its race and achieve progress to a level that it does not

need to borrow.

"Meaning the diversity and differences among us are the catalyst of Malaysia's strength, eventually creating expertise, ideas and progress besides serving as the basis for continued development," he said.

On the Korean crisis, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia is of the view that the crisis should be resolved through direct discussions between the North and South without the presence of a third party.

This is because both countries are Koreans and the best way to resolve their problems is to discuss it among themselves, he said.

-- BERNAMA
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