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Mahathir-Globalisation

BENEFITS OF GLOBALISATION NOT BEING ENJOYED, SAID DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 11 (Bernama) -- The benefits of globalisation are not being enjoyed because globalisation is being promoted by the rich and greedy for their selfish self-interests only, said former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Speaking at the Globalisation Forum 2003 in Okinawa Japan today, Dr Mahathir said that the globalisation era was here but it had not created the ideal world that modern science and technology seemed to promise.

Dr Mahathir said that the obsession with free trade had not brought about an equitable world.

"So far what we are seeing is a world in turmoil, in economic recession, in political instability," he said in his keynote address themed "Democracy and Security in the Globalisation Era."

He said that ideas about globalisation were coming out not from the international community as a whole but from the powerful countries, the same countries which at one time dominated the world through their empires.

"Not surprisingly the agenda which they have set for the globalised world focuses on ideas and strategies which they have obvious advantage and the particular problems which plague them," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that democracy alone would not create a modern global civilisation because while the world needed democracy but it also needed justice and fair play.

"We need not just free trade, but more importantly fair trade. Unfortunately in the globalised era, the obsession with democracy and security against terrorists have negated the benefits which the globalised world should enjoy from the advances in the technology of flight and communication," he said.

Thus, the globalised world is expected to accept only one ideology and political system - democracy - and one security problem, that which is about securing the world from attacks by terrorists, he said.

Speaking on security and terrorism, Dr Mahathir said that the security measures taken had themselves caused more damage than the actual attacks by the terrorists as people were not only afraid to travel but disliked doing so, and these had negative impact on the economy such as bankruptcies of airlines.

"The world is getting paranoid and the most powerful countries are the most paranoid of all," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that more regrettably, instead of reducing the front against the terrorists, the world was actually seeing the front being widened where attacks against Afghanistan and Iraq had brought about more security problems.

"Where before there were no terror attacks in Iraq and there was no proof that Iraq was involved in terror attacks, now we hear everyday terror attacks taking a toll on the coalition forces. Now Iraqis and Afghans have produced more recruits for the terror gangs," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that the greatest powers in the world had got no capacity to learn from the past, such as the lessons of Vietnam or their own recent experience in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"That is why there is talk about attacking Syria and Iran, even Lebanon, Sudan and Libya," he said.

On the Palestinian problem, Dr Mahathir said that the conflict between the Jews and Arabs began when the Europeans, in their attempts to solve

their Jewish problem, encouraged the Zionists to seek a homeland in Palestine, to create the State of Israel.

"It is not religion at all. It is territorial, it is about expropriating Arab lands in order to create the State of Israel," he said.

He said what the world was seeing today was a fight to regain the land that the Palestinian Arabs had lost.

"Having failed in conventional wars assisted by their cousins against Israel because of European support for the latter (Israel), they (Palestinians) launched the stone-throwing intifada," he said.

On security, Dr Mahathir said that small countries did not feel secure any more as their domestic affairs were being interfered with by the big powers and their independence undermined.

"They are being told what to do and how to do it. If they fail, then all manner of punitive actions would be taken against them," he said.

Speaking on United Nations (UN), the former Premier said that the world body was not free to decide or to act as it was under the control of the five victors of the last great war.

But worse things have happened lately. Powerful nations have ignored the UN altogether and invaded and occupied countries under false pretexts, he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that democracy was not a religion.

"It cannot solve all society's problems. Certainly it cannot ensure security for its practitioners," said Dr Mahathir.

-- BERNAMA

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