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Mahathir-Independence

DR MAHATHIR PROUD THAT M'SIA IS ABLE TO SAFEGUARD HER INDEPENDENCE

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is proud that Malaysia is able to safeguard her independence even without the financial support from developed countries like the U.S.

"If they want, they can keep their money. We don't need their money," he said of the U.S. Senate decision to restrict some aid to Malaysia because of his remarks at the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Summit recently about Jews ruling the world by proxy.

The U.S. Senate unanimously agreed on Monday to condition \$1.2 million (RM4.56 million) in military training aid to Malaysia on a determination by Secretary of State Colin Powell that the country supports and promotes religious freedom, including for Jews.

Speaking at the breaking of the fast organised by Federal Territory Umno here today, Dr Mahathir said there is religious freedom in Malaysia, contrary to claims by certain quarters.

For example, the Chinese and Indians who came to Malaysia hundreds of years ago are free to practise their respective religions, he said.

He said the situation was different in some countries where the abducted slaves were forced to follow the religion of their masters.

The Prime Minister also said mutual respect of each other's religion could erase suspicions and bring the people closer.

This was vital to the country's peace and progress, he said, noting that many non-Muslims also joined Muslims in the breaking of the fast during the Ramadan fasting month and similarly many Muslims visited their friends during the recent Deepavali celebrations.

During the function, held at the National Mosque, Dr Mahathir and his deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi also handed over assistance, including RM100 each to 30 needy people.

Federal Territory Umno Chief Datuk Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor said that over the past four years, some 6,500 needy people had received assistance from Umno.

Dr Mahathir and Abdullah later joined Muslims in performing the Maghrib prayers.

-- BERNAMA

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