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Mahathir-UN

EFFORTS ON UN REFORMS MUST BE PURSUED, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 28 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that efforts on reforms of the United Nations must be pursued even though it will take a long time and even felt to be impossible due to the veto power held by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

He said that the process could be difficult as the five permanent members, the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China, would certainly disagree to such a move which could affect their position and influence in the world body.

"It is not going to be easy as we have granted veto power to these five countries and any move to restructure the United Nations must get the nod of the five countries. I have stressed that this is something undemocratic and yet we know that all these countries are talking about democracy.

"They want this world to become democratic to the extent that they are prepared to resort to violence to force other nations to accept the democratic system," he told reporters at the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) station in Subang near here on his return from his overseas trip.

He was in London where he spoke Monday at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London before making a three-day visit to Sweden. He addressed the 58th Session of the UN General Assembly Thursday and stopped over in Monaco Friday on his way home.

Dr Mahathir was asked at the media conference to elaborate on his address at the UN General Assembly where he called for the abolition of the system of single-country veto in the UN Security Council.

When making the call, Dr Mahathir suggested that the system be modified, so that two veto powers backed by three other members of the Security Council could block any UN resolution.

The Prime Minister said that it was even unfortunate that there were countries among the five permanent members prepared to ignore the rest of the Security Council members and the UN as a whole to pursue their own interest like the decision to invade Iraq in March.

"They themselves do not practise democracy, they regard this as their special right. In democracy, we cannot accept such special rights. It has to have the agreement of all parties.

"It is very obvious that the majority of UN member countries are unhappy over the current situation," he said.

The Prime Minister said that all UN member countries must persevere to exert pressure on the world body because if nothing was done, this undemocratic situation would continue to go on. "If not, we will continue to be restricted by these five countries," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, was also asked whether he was concerned over the possibility of tussles for the posts like the Umno deputy presidency when he steps down next month. "I feel that even if there are tussles in the component parties, eventually they will be resolved amicably," he said.

Asked what his advice would be to Umno members to ensure that the party remains strong and dynamic, Dr Mahathir said: "In Umno, we must uphold best practices."

-- BERNAMA

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