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Syed Hamid-Europe

GAP BETWEEN EUROPE AND EAST MUST BE ACCEPTED BY ALL - SYED HAMID

KUALA LUMPUR, June 24 (Bernama) -- The gap between Europe and the East in various fields is a reality that must be accepted by all, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

"Indeed, the reality is there, it must be highlighted to bridge the gap that has existed for so long.

"The gap between Europe and the East is a reality, to resolve the issue, it should not be swept under the carpet.

"It must be discussed...when we talk about it, we can find areas that can narrow the gap between us," he told reporters after attending the Malaysia Regional Programme dialogue organised by Padday Schubert Sdn Bhd, a consultancy firm, here.

Syed Hamid said the prime minister's speech at the 54th Umno General Assembly on Thursday, which touched on the Europeans, was raised at the dialogue.

"I told the participants it is important the reality is accepted by all," he said.

The half-a-day dialogue is attended by ambassadors, high commissioners and chief executives of foreign companies based in Malaysia.

In his presidential address at the three-day assembly, Prime Minister and Umno President Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had warned Malaysians to be wary of the Europeans, saying that future threats to the country could once again come from them.

He had said Europeans, including those who have migrated to the Americas, Australia and New Zealand -- sometimes referred to as Westerners -- who have colonised much of the world in the past might seek to do so again in the near future.

Because of this, he said, there was a need to know the Europeans well for "our fate, our life will depend on how we interact with them."

Syed Hamid also said the G8 (Group of Developed Countries) informal dialogue with non-member countries in Evian, France at the end of last month was a good forum to narrow the gap between Europe and the East, which was represented by developing countries.

"This is because they can listen to the views from developing countries in their interaction with G8 members," he said.

Syed Hamid said there were suggestions at the dialogue that the Palestinians were to be blamed for the West Asian conflict.

"I said the victims are the Palestinians...America should not be seen as pro-Israel. The US must be seen as a fair and just judge to achieve peace," he said.

Syed Hamid said he also told the dialogue participants that the diversity in Malaysia is being used as a strength to develop the country.

-- BERNAMA

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