

11 SEP 2003

Chor-Threat

GOVT TO BAN FOREIGN MAG INTENT ON SABOTAGING MALAYSIA- CHOR

PUTRAJAYA, Sept 11 (Bernama) -- The Government will ban any foreign magazine with an agenda to sabotage Malaysia, Deputy Home Minister Datuk Chor Chee Heung said today.

The Government would also not permit any editions of such magazines to be sold to the public if the edition or foreign publication was intent on hurling unfounded allegations against the country and its leaders, he said.

"Until now, the government has been adopting a liberal attitude...we have allowed constructive criticism but with such threats being issued...we will have to take very firm action against them," he said after attending the Home Ministry's monthly assembly here.

He said this when asked to comment on the Prime Minister's disclosure yesterday that he had been threatened by a New York-based magazine, the Business Week.

According to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad the magazine wanted an interview but when he declined it threatened to write nasty things about him and Malaysia.

"There will be no compromise in matters involving national interest," Chor said.

He said police would study the possibility of investigating the threat.

In SEREMBAN, Umno Youth Chief Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the magazine's threat smacked of arrogance.

He said western media which often spoke about upholding freedom of expression and so on should respect the Prime Minister's right to exercise his freedom in not wanting to grant the interview.

Otherwise it would show that the magazine itself was not upholding the freedom and rights of the individual, he said.

Threatening the Prime Minister was being insolent and irresponsible on the part of Business Week, Hishammuddin said after chairing a meeting of the 10th Sukma Supreme Council.

Meanwhile in KUALA LUMPUR, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said: "It is unethical and improper for any international media, no matter where it is based or how wide its circulation, to threaten a leader of a country.

" It is not simply affecting the person, but also the integrity of the country," he told reporters after launching the Business Forum to be held in conjunction with the 10th Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit in Putrajaya next month. He also witnessed the signing of an agreement between the forum organiser and 20 event-partners here.

The OIC Business Forum is organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI) in association with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, OIC and Malaysia South-South Association (Massa).

Syed Hamid said threatening a leader of a country is like threatening the integrity of a nation.

"It does not speak well of the media world, nor journalism that it is supposed to represent," he said.

It is the right of Dr Mahathir to accept or refuse an interview and it is improper and unethical for any media or journalist to write such a nasty letter, he said.

-- BERNAMA

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