

17 OCT 2003

OIC-Wrap-up

MAHATHIR SLAMS WESTERN ATTEMPTS TO DOMINATE MUSLIMS AS SUMMIT ENDS

By: Shakir Husain

PUTRAJAYA, Oct 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad strongly denounced the Western countries for continuously trying to dominate the world's 1.3 billion Muslims as an historic summit of Islamic leaders concluded here on Friday.

Mahathir hit back at the critics of his opening speech to the 10th Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit on Thursday in which he said that the Jews ruled the world by proxy because they dominated the world's powerful Western countries.

His speech drew criticism in Israel, Europe, the United States and Australia, where Mahathir's comments were described as anti-Jew.

Speaking at a news conference after chairing the summit in this federal administrative capital, Dr Mahathir said:

"Are we not allowed at all to criticise the Jews if they do things which are wrong?"

He said the Israelis were involved in terrorism in Palestine as they practised a policy of destroying homes and killing many people in revenge for any Palestinian attack against Israel.

Dr Mahathir blamed the "European Jewish problem" for the creation of the state of Israel, saying that before the Jewish state's existence, Muslims lived peacefully with Jews.

He said that most of the Western leaders were biased against Muslims and wanted to recolonise them.

"Most of them are biased. Not all, most of them. And they feel that while it is proper to criticise Muslims and Arabs it is not proper to criticise Europeans and Jews.

"Apparently they think they are privileged people, but we don't think so," he said.

The prime minister said that while colonialism might have ended, the former colonial powers had resorted to adopting new direct and indirect ways of domination.

The Islamic summit with the theme "Knowledge and Morality for the Progress of the Ummah" issued a communique expressing support for Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation.

They expressed solidarity with Syria and Lebanon amid Israeli military aggression and denounced the US Congress Accountability Act to impose unilateral sanction on Syria.

The summit adopted the Putrajaya Declaration which spells out the new way forward for the Muslim world.

Close cooperation in economics, trade, science and technology field were among the pledges made by the OIC leaders.

The leaders promised to restructure and revitalise the OIC to make it more in tune with modern times to better serve the ummah.

The prime minister, who is stepping down at the end this month, received a certificate of merit from the OIC in recognition of his outstanding, substantive and effective contribution towards serving the Muslims.

Malaysia will lead the OIC for three years until the next summit in Senegal in 2006.

-- Bernama

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