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Symposium-Mahathir

SCHOLARS SLAM WESTERN MEDDLING IN MUSLIM AFFAIRS

By: Shakir Husain

ABU DHABI, May 16 (Bernama) -- Scholars taking part in a one-day symposium that focused on Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's policies roundly criticised the West for meddling in affairs of Muslim countries.

The speakers at the seminar in Abu Dhabi warned against the hostile campaign aimed at imposing Western culture on the Islamic world and attempts to undermine Islamic unity.

The seminar organised by the Abu Dhabi-based Zayed Centre for Coordination and Follow-Up on Wednesday discussed the contribution of Malaysia in developing Islamic economies.

It recalled Malaysia's successful tackling of the 1997 economic crisis and highlighted the measures that were adopted to regain economic health.

The speakers approvingly reviewed Dr Mahathir's political career and his achievements in the last two decades.

They said Malaysia had benefited from Dr Mahathir's political vision. Zayed Centre Executive Director Mohammed Khalifa Al Murrar said Malaysia's transition from an Asian backwater to an economic success story made some superpowers to undermine the country, which appeared as a major threat to those powers.

He said despite the setbacks during the economic crisis, Malaysia succeeded in pushing ahead with its development plans.

Murrar said the emergence of Malaysia as an economic power could not have been possible without Dr Mahathir's vision.

Keynote speakers included International Islamic University of Malaysia president Tan Sri Sanusi Junid and Universiti Sains Malaysia's Professor Syed Ahmed Hussein.

The Malaysian Ambassador to the UAE, Datuk Syed Hussein Al Habshee, said: "Everybody knows the continuation of the hostile campaigns which are waged by certain circles against the Arab and Islamic world."

"But no one, including the Western media, can deny the progress achieved by Malaysia under the leadership of Dr Mahathir," he said.

Syed Ahmed described Dr Mahathir's vision as a distinctive and coherent ideology, which had been built on the rules of nationalism, capitalism, Islam and popularity.

He called on major Islamic countries to adopt a joint action and establish an Islamic Dinar.

The Muslim world should "invite Dr Mahathir to lead an independent group of eminent Muslim scholars, thinkers, scientists and captains of industry to come together in a 'Muslim World Vision Group' to reflect on a blueprint to provide a direction for future cooperation among Muslim nations and peoples," Ahmed said.

Sanusi lambasted the United States, saying the American goal in Iraq was to build a world empire through the use of Iraqi revenue. He accused the West of hypocrisy on the question of democracy.

The West does not want democracy in the Islamic world "because adopting democracy, say in Iraq, will lead to the establishment of an Islamic State emanating from the will of the people which is not, in favour of the American interests."

Sanusi called on the Muslim countries to benefit from Malaysia's experience in democracy, which stems from self-reliance and evolution.

He said the Malaysian model stood for peaceful coexistence of different

racess and religions.

He said democracy in the West suffered many defects such as the influence of big business on the political process.

-- BERNAMA

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