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Terrorism-US  
TERRORISM ATTACKS THE RULE OF LAW, SAYS U.S.

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DAVOS (Switzerland), Jan 25 (Bernama) -- Terrorism is an attack on the rule of law and not buildings, people or even nations, U.S.

Attorney-General John Ashcroft said here Friday.

And, he said, it took the Sept 11 attack for the U.S. to realise that preventing terrorism was more rewarding than awaiting the commission of such an act.

"It took a very distressing interruption on our tranquility and the loss of 3,000 lives for us to realise that awaiting the commission of an act and prosecuting the perpetrators is not a potential that is very rewarding," he told a plenary session on terrorism at the ongoing World Economic Forum meeting.

Ashcroft told the session in which Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad also spoke that Sept 11 had resulted in the U.S. shifting its priority from prosecution to prevention.

Describing this as a tall order that he was not sure could be done, he however said that this must be America's objective to save lives.

He also said that one remarkable way the fight against terrorism had changed the world was by expanding the free world.

Citing Afghanistan as an example, he said: "Ask the Afghans who now attend school and watch with pride as rule of law is established".

Ashcroft said the war on terrorism would see a change and improvement in the integrity of governmental systems and systems of integrity essential to the rule of law.

He pointed out that the targets of terrorism were not buildings or people of even nations but values and the rule of law.

"I believe we will see improved communication systems that will provide for sharing of information between nations," he said.

America's highest law enforcement officer said he believed it was overwhelmingly politically supportable to fight terrorism because the world community of people who loved freedom and respected the rule of law was substantially greater than those who repudiated it and wanted to impose anarchy.

Dr Mahathir told the session that when he said recently that the world not only failed to remove causes of terrorism but was creating new ones, he meant the proposed U.S.-led attack on Iraq.

"If you do that you will kill a lot of innocent people, make people angry, certainly a lot of Muslims are going to feel angry," he said.

He said efforts must be made to find out the root causes of terrorism and why people including those enjoying a good life were motivated to do horrible things.

"If we understand what moves them, then we should try not to amplify it, create other situations and lead more people to join them and commit such acts of terror," he said.

He also spoke of Malaysia's anti-terrorism efforts and again defended the use of the Internal Security Act that provided for detention without trial, adding that this law was necessary for the people's safety.

-- BERNAMA

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