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"THE ECONOMIST" ARTICLE A CONTINUITY OF WESTERN AGENDA - ZAM

KUALA LUMPUR, April 25 (Bernama) -- The article in "The Economist" magazine containing strong criticism against the leadership of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is a continuity of the Western agenda to tarnish the image of the Prime Minister, Deputy Information Minister Datuk Zainuddin Maidin said today.

He said the move by the London-based magazine to condemn Dr Mahathir in the article entitled "A Qualified Success" published in the April 5 edition would not erode the confidence of the people in the leadership of the Prime Minister.

"The western media harbours unending revenge against Dr Mahathir because he has eliminated the element of foreign powers in politics and national economy," he told BERNAMA.

Zainuddin said the attack by the magazine, an influential publication known to reflect the voice of the British to the world, was part of the framework of the Western doctrine to discredit Third World leaders, who blocked the advance of globalisation, which is being implemented in the form of a new colonialism.

"Unfortunately in Malaysia, the group, which previously opposed imperialism and capitalism, has now become part of the western mechanism with or without realising efforts towards this end," he said when commenting on the article which portrayed a negative picture of the country's development and progress under Dr Mahathir's leadership.

"Dr Mahathir is being made the scapegoat because he broke the wings of the foreign power in this country that has crept into Umno that shocked the world," he said.

Dr Mahathir also thwarted attempts by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to gain control of the country's economy by "putting on a sweet face."

Zainuddin said the magazine's report was their latest effort to force Dr Mahathir to step down immediately despite his announcement that he would do so in October.

"This is because their prediction that Dr Mahathir will continue to remain in power has been proven wrong. They also portrayed a picture as though Dr Mahathir is no longer needed now.

"They also tried to create an impression as though there is pressure from within his own party for Dr Mahathir to stay on, a move aimed at pitting him against his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi," he said.

Abdullah said yesterday it was obvious from the article that the writer and the magazine had ill-will against the country's leadership.

He said nobody, including the Western media, could dismiss the reality of progress and success achieved by Malaysia under Dr Mahathir's leadership.

Zainuddin said: "Unfortunately, there are political groups in the country which failed to see this evil game to divide the people and destabilise the country.

"Surely, what is done by The Economist will not help to correct the Malaysians' perception of the British Government which has been marred by its move to be in cohort with the US in the March 20 invasion of Iraq," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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