

19 JAN 2003

Mahathir-Terrorism

THE WAY OF THE WEST NOT THE ONLY WAY TO DEAL WITH TERRORISM

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 19 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that there are many things to be learned from the west but their ways are not the only way to deal with things.

In the context of terrorism, he said, the insistence that only the western way is the only universal way is wrong and "we (Asian countries) must insist that we are as right as anybody else".

Dr Mahathir said there is the Asian way which can be different from what the United States and Europeans propose, suggesting that Asians, Malaysia in particular, must give their inputs and be noted.

Dr Mahathir said this in a Special Interview aired on NTV7 at 8.00 pm tonight.

He said terrorism can be tackled in different ways and Malaysia on its own has had much experience in tackling terrorism, which is proof that there are many ways to do things and still succeed.

"Malaysia views that the more important thing is to deal with the causes of terrorism. Unless you remove its causes, you are not going to be able to put a stop to it because there will be new recruits.

"Even if you arrest, kill or assassinate all terrorists there is no guarantee that others would not be recruited, especially when the anger and frustration is very great," he added.

Dr Mahathir also said that it is illogical to accuse Malaysia as one of the countries that nests terrorists and blame it for the Sept 11 attacks just because two of the people involved were in Malaysia plotting the attack.

"They were most of the time in the United States. If they ask Malaysia why don't we stop them, we can also ask the same question - When they were training there (United States) learning to fly aircraft, why didn't you put a stop to it before it happened," he added.

Dr Mahathir urged these countries not to generalise and stereotype people, labelling certain people as terrorists simply because there are some terrorists among them.

He said this would only cause the fight against terrorists to be deflected to things that are not productive.

There are terrorists in every group, namely Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, Hindu terrorists all over the world but why is it whenever a Muslim is involved, the word Muslim is attached to the word terrorist, he said.

Touching on religion which is often associated with terrorism, Dr Mahathir said religion, in contrast to negative and distorted perception, provides the value system for individuals and for the society.

"There is still a very important role to be played by one's belief in religion. For me as a Muslim, I find being a Muslim provides me with guidance...as to what is right and what is wrong," he said.

Linking that to family values, he said, the role of the family is very important as it has the effects of stabilising the society. He said in certain advanced countries, the concept of family has changed with detrimental consequences.

"Their definition of family has changed. A single person living with an adopted child, a child whose father is unknown and two men or two women living together are considered as a family.

"Their concept of family is not what we Malaysians accept. We maintain

the traditional concept of a family of a man and a woman getting married, getting children and setting up a family," Dr Mahathir said.

He said the right family concept and combination brings up a child to believe in certain values like marriage and family and because of this faith, the child would uphold them throughout his or her life.

-- BERNAMA

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