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Mahathir-Antarctica

ANTARCTICA SHOULD BE A LAND OWNED BY NO ONE, SAYS MAHATHIR

PENANG, May 3 (Bernama) -- The demand to preserve Antarctica as a global common of terra nullis or a land owned by no one should be embodied in international agreements, said former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

He said that even if there was a general agreement that resources of Antarctica should not be exploited, there would be countries opposition to such a treaty.

"Rogue nations may try to extract the oil and other mineral resources in which Antarctica is rich" he said in a keynote address at an international seminar on Antarctica organised by the Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) here today.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had contribute a serious idea to preserve Antarctica as a uninhabited land and it should be given serious consideration by the world.

"Malaysia has voiced that there are countries which lay claim to Antarctica and they may just try to extract the rich deposits of oil and minerals and destroy forever the pristine condition of this icy continent," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that there was a great deal of worry now that if the ice of Antarctica melt for whatever reason then the level of the sea would rise so high that many island nations would just disappear beneath the sea, and much of the countries bordering the sea would shrink as the sea flooded the low-lying areas and the river basins.

He said the fear was very deal and as the world was experiencing global warming due to the shrinking of the ozone layer.

"Now if Antarctica is exploited for its great mineral resources, we cannot really know what effect it would have on the ice continent and on the environment throughout the world.

It was because of this fear, he said that Malaysia decided to

oppose
claims of ownership of Antarctica, he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was now clear that Malaysia had gained
recognition
for its interest in Antarctica and the research work that it was
doing
there.

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