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MAHATHIR-BOOK (A review)

MAHATHIR CALLS A SPADE A SPADE IN NEW BOOK

By: Yong Soo Heong

KUALA LUMPUR, April 30 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad always calls spade a spade.

This is amply demonstrated in the prime minister's soon-to-be-released book, "A New Deal For Asia" (Pelanduk Publications paperback) where he displayed his dismay at rogue currency traders who wreaked havoc on Asian economies in 1997 and 1998.

The book provides an insight on the thoughts of one of the world's leading statesmen and great thinkers who comments on various contemporary issues with relative ease.

Those on the receiving end of his incisive and analytical criticisms in this easy-to-read book may smart in their eyes. His detractors may not warm up to his conjectures on how the financial crisis came about.

But then again it is hard to dismiss his focus and analysis of the compelling issues of our time and how they came to play.

Providing a "ring-side" account on one of the 20th century's greatest economic upheavals, Dr Mahathir writes from the perspective of a firsthand witness to the wave of destruction that spread across the region.

Displaying an indomitable spirit in sketching out a road map on how Asia should rise from the ashes of the destructive financial crisis, Dr Mahathir also shares his thoughts how Asia rode to prosperity, who had shattered the Asian dream, Asian values in a turbulent world, Japan's role in reviving Asia and how to face the challenges of the new millennium.

In the book, he unleashed his annoyance on those who had delayed Malaysia's march towards becoming a developed nation as espoused under Vision 2020.

Dr Mahathir, who does not mince his words, also devoted a significant portion of his book on the traits of Europeans, whom he described as warlike and acquisitive.

"Never a year passed in their history when they were not fighting, not warring. Peace does not mean no fighting, only no formal war. And so today they are once again expending money on their warring capabilities just to keep in fighting trim and to overawe others," he said.

Off and on, he said Europeans would lob bombs and missiles to satisfy their warlike instincts.

These qualities of their civilisation have led them to develop the most efficient war machines equipped with ever more lethal weapons. With these continuously upgraded machines, they warred against each other and with everyone everywhere, he said.

Dr Mahathir said their history is therefore one of endless wars, each one more ferocious and more destructive than the last.

Even before they had finished one war they were already preparing for the next under the pretext that "to have peace you must prepare for war", he said.

Their war machines were transported across the oceans to fight unequal wars against the less warlike and ill-equipped peoples inhabiting Asia, Africa and the Americas, said Dr Mahathir.

He added, "No thought was given to the rights of these people who had inhabited these lands centuries before the Europeans came.

"To the Europeans, any land they came upon was regarded as being newly discovered and therefore available for occupation. They even invented the idea that they were sent by God to bring "civilisation" to the "heathen"

natives."

If the natives resisted their civilising occupation, they would simply be brushed aside or just rubbed off the face of this earth, he said.

Dr Mahathir given the warlike and acquisitive traits of Europeans, peace is anathema to them.

"They must have war. To have war they must find enemies. Now that the Europeans are more or less at peace with each other, it is time to turn on the non-Europeans," he said.

By accident or design, he said the Europeans had invented a new weapon through currency manipulation since they had lost their appetite for death and glory for themselves.

The new weapon can force the enemy to its knees without the slightest risk to the operator and the latter can actually make billions of dollars through operating it, he said.

"By buying or borrowing the currencies of countries and then selling them down, it is possible to devalue them and consequently impoverish these countries and their peoples. Perhaps there was a plot and perhaps there was not.

"But the great think-tanks of the Europeans are not beyond devising this financial weapon in order to achieve victory with profit. Within a period of days this diabolically simple, seemingly non-lethal weapon had forced the emerging and obstreperous countries in East Asia to buckle under and surrender."

-- BERNAMA

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