

Leaders elated over Obama's election
Malaysiakini.com
Nov 5, 2008
Athi Veerangan

Barack Obama's sweeping victory in the US presidential election has been applauded as "wonderful and triumph over racial barriers" by DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng.

Obama's rise to arguably the most powerful position in the world augurs well for global politics, said Lim, who is also the Penang chief minister.

He described the landslide win as a symbol of transformation of the American mindset.

"The Americans have voted in a president based on character and the principles of rule of law, equality, human rights, justice and democracy, rather than colour of skin," he said.

Lim saw this as a broadside attack on many governments that practise racism and discrimination.

He also noted that many in the international community had scorned US 'arrogance, hegemony and racism', although they also admired the Americans for being enterprising, energetic and highly skilled.

Obama will take steps to revive the ailing American economy, as this will help stimulate the global market as well.

Democrat candidate Obama, 47, was elected the 44th US president and will be installed in office on Jan 20 next year.

Son of a black father from Kenya and a white mother from Kansas, the senator from Illinois sealed his triumph by defeating Senator John McCain in hard-fought battleground states - Ohio, Florida, Iowa and Virginia.

Respect for smaller nations

In Kuala Lumpur, Foreign Affairs Minister Rais Yatim said that Obama's victory is meaningful not just for Americans but also for everyone in the world.

Rais said Barack's victory could mean less use of American force in resolving world conflicts, and more respect for smaller nations.

"Malaysia... hopes Obama's government will be more sensitive to the sovereignty of smaller nations and will not use force in resolving global conflicts," he said in a statement.

"Obama's victory is seen as bringing change and hope to the world."

Malaysia welcomes him as the new light in the struggle for democracy. As America's first black president his victory has shown that Americans can accept a leader regardless of colour, religion or beliefs."

Rais said Malaysia, a predominantly Muslim nation, hopes the new administration would also

pay greater attention to developing countries as well as to humanitarian and developmental issues.

Malaysia has been a long-time critic of US military intervention in Iraq, with former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad branding incumbent US President George Bush a "war criminal".

Anwar: A new chapter

Meanwhile Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim said that Obama's decisive victory signals a new chapter in the history of America.

"His call for unity and his promise to forge a new direction in the relationship between the US and the rest of the world is welcomed by Malaysians.

"The support that president-elect Obama draws from across racial, religious and generational lines parallels the sentiments felt by Malaysians from all walks of life who earlier this year cast votes in vehement opposition to the failed policies of an incumbent regime," he said in a statement.

Anwar added that nations which have been at odds with the US may now find opportunities to cooperate on issues of foreign policy, sustainable development and the environment.

"His administration also brings renewed prospects for engagement between the United States and Muslim countries.

"Some of the most contentious issues of our time, including the ongoing conflicts and confrontations in the Middle East, require a commitment to diplomacy, a willingness to engage in a meaningful dialogue and a departure from the aggressive unilateralism witnessed in recent years.

"In this we anticipate that president-elect Obama will show leadership where previous administrations have failed."

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