

**Knowledge, Good Character Best Defence In Face Of Modern Imperialism, Says Mahathir**  
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TANJUNG MALIM, Sept 21 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is capable of facing a new form of imperialism if its people could master knowledge and possess good character, said former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said with sufficient knowledge, the country could be better administered by the people according to the local mould without bowing to foreign pressure, which was part of the new imperialism.

"One challenge for us is acquiring knowledge. With enough knowledge, we can determine our country's development through our own efforts," he said when delivering a Za'aba premier lecture titled, "Can Malaysia Face The Challenge Of A New Form of Imperialism", at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), here, Wednesday.

Dr Mahathir said western powers were the real imperialists, whereby to them imperialism was to conquer or subjugate and administer other countries until those countries lost power.

"But that is the old form of imperialism. Today, although not directly, imperialism still exists where they (western powers) control other societies in various ways such as politically, economically and socially, and influence people's thinking."

For example, Dr Mahathir said, many countries were still subjected to western imperialism by accepting and applying western concepts and ideologies like capitalism, democracy and socialism.

He said the west also tried to control the world by introducing their lifestyle and values to other societies through various mediums such as television, the print media, magazines and the Internet.

"Their way of thinking has crept into ours without us realising it or not."

Concerned that western influence would continue to spread to the extent of destroying local morals and character, Dr Mahathir said building a strong character and personality should be given more emphasis in schools.

"A suitable school co-curricular programme should be drawn up to promote noble values (among students). This aspect is touched on in the religious or moral classes, but the religious classes, for instance, focus more on religious rituals and not on life's values.

Dr Mahathir said besides parents, teachers played an important role in inculcating noble values to produce a generation that could face the challenges of modern imperialism.

He also stressed on the importance of increasing knowledge in science as a ticket for success in this era.

"In protecting ourselves from imperialistic onslaughts, we need to master science knowledge without sidelining other branches of knowledge including religious knowledge,

but science empowers us in facing the new imperialism," he said.

Dr Mahathir also reiterated the importance of mastering English as a language of knowledge because a lot of working papers and research findings were written in the English language.

Speaking to reporters later, he said mastering English did not make one less nationalistic, but a real nationalist would instead want to see Malaysia at par with other nations.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir received the Tokoh Za'aba Award, the highest given by UPSI's Institute of Malay Civilisation, for his contributions to the Malay community in the educational, social, economic and language spheres.

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