

Dr M says American mothers are promiscuous in attack against US free speech
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 18 — Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad suggested today that American mothers “sleep around with just about anybody” when he attacked the United States for defending free speech while PKR warned governments against exploiting Muslim anger to restrict freedoms as protests continued to spread across the Muslim world over a controversial film mocking the Prophet Muhammad.

Malaysia’s outspoken former prime minister said the West’s idea of freedom of expression as being a part of human rights was one that may not be accepted in the cultures of Asians or Muslims worldwide.

In contrast, PKR deputy president Azmin Ali said in a separate statement that “dictatorial regimes” should not exploit the anger of Muslims to curtail freedoms.

“Those who blame freedoms for the production of the film are leaders who are anti-democratic and anti-freedom of the people, and are exploiting the anger of the people to reduce democratic space for political purposes,” he said.

Dr Mahathir (picture) was unrelenting, however, in his attack against the US which has officially condemned the film.

“It would seem that the liberal West believes that free speech is licence to curse and insult other people without limit. I think Western values have gone crazy,” the now-retired Dr Mahathir wrote in his blog today.

“How would one feel if someone comes up to you and calls you ‘a bastard, the offspring of sex between your mother and some man who is not your legally wedded father’?”

“The Americans would feel nothing because in their society this is normal. Their mothers sleep around with just about anybody,” said the controversial political veteran.

Such a practice would be considered a norm in an American society, he said, adding that apart from American mothers, fathers behave much the same way.

“It is an expression of the equality of the sexes,” he said.

Dr Mahathir was railing against US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, whom he said had appeared to defend the maker of the film when the latter was quoted in the media as saying, “We do not stop individual citizens from expressing their views, no matter how distasteful they may be.”

US embassies worldwide have been placed on high alert following protests against the controversial video, which have even led to the death of a US ambassador and three other Americans last week during a protest at its consulate in the Libyan city of Benghazi.

Protests have spread to other countries across the Muslim world, and have also reached Malaysian shores, uniting Muslims here from across the political divide in their bid to express their unhappiness at the US for the film.

The youth wing of Malaysia's largest Muslim party Umno will be organising a mass protest after Friday prayers this week, while last week's global protests were also joined by Islamist party PAS.

In a statement here, PAS's ally PKR said the film was likely made with the deliberate intention to destroy world peace and spread "Islamophobia" among the non-Muslims of the world.

"PKR urges the US to take full and immediate responsibility to condemn this criminal act and take proactive measures to maintain world peace and destroy this false perception against the Muslims," said the party's deputy president Azmin Ali today.

But noting that the anti-American anger in the Muslim world has continued unabated for days now, even resulting in protests leading to deaths, the lawmaker said he hoped there would not be any exploitation of Muslim anger over the matter.

The crudely made 13-minute English-language film, shot in California and circulated on the internet under several titles including "Innocence of Muslims", mocks the Prophet Mohammad.

Clips of the film posted on the internet since July have been attributed to a man by the name of Sam Bacile, which two people linked to the film have said was likely an alias.

For many Muslims, any depiction of the Prophet is blasphemous. Caricatures deemed insulting in the past have provoked protests and drawn condemnations from officials, preachers, ordinary Muslims and many Christians.

Reuters news agency has reported that a California man convicted of bank fraud was taken in for questioning on Saturday by officers investigating possible probation violations stemming from the making of the video clip.

Nakoula Basseley Nakoula, 55, voluntarily left his home in the early hours of Saturday morning for the meeting at a sheriff's station in the Los Angeles suburb of Cerritos.

Nakoula, who has denied involvement in the film in a phone call to his Coptic Christian bishop, was ushered out of his home and into a waiting car by several sheriff's deputies, his face shielded by a scarf, hat and sunglasses.

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