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114:

PARLIAMENT-UNIVERSITY

P KUALA LUMPUR, APRIL 8 (BERNAMA) — EDUCATION MINISTER, DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMED SAID TODAY CERTAIN GROUPS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WERE PLANNING TO CREATE CHAOS IN THEIR CAMPUSES ON THE OPENING OF THE 1975/76 ACADEMIC SESSION NEXT MONTH.

HE SAID THE STUDENTS WERE PRINTING PAMPHLETS AND WERE DETERMINED TO CREATE INCIDENTS IN PROTEST AGAINST AMENDMENTS TO THE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES ACT.

THE STUDENTS, IN MAKING THEIR PLANS, ASSUMED THAT NO AUTHORITY NOT EVEN THE GOVERNMENT OR THE UNIVERSITIES COULD TAKE ACTION IF THEY CONFINED THEIR ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE CAMPUSES.

THE MINISTER SAID THIS WAS MOVING THE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AMENDMENT BILL IN THE DEWAN RAKYAT.

THE BILL AMONG OTHER THINGS IS AIMED AT PROVIDING MORE STRINGENT REGULATIONS TO CHECK STUDENT ACTIVITIES WHICH CAN BE PREJUDICIAL TO NATIONAL SECURITY.

IT ALSO EMPOWERS THE YANG DI PERTUAN AGUNG TO APPOINT PRINCIPAL OFFICERS SUCH AS CHANCELLORS AND VICE-CHANCELLORS INSTEAD OF BY THE UNIVERSITY COUNCILS.

IT ALSO PROVIDES FOR THE VICE CHANCELLOR TO APPOINT DEANS AND DEPUTY DEANS AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTIONS OF THEIR UNIVERSITIES.

DR. MAHATHIR STRESSED THAT THE STUDENTS' PLANS WOULD CREATE CHAOS AND WOULD NOT BE CONDUCIVE TO STUDIES IN THE CAMPUSES.

— BERNAMA 1955/MD

(F)

115:

PARLIAMENT UNIVERSITY 2 KUALA LUMPUR

HE SAID THAT THEY PARTICULARLY WANTED TO STOP FRESHIES FROM PURSUING THEIR STUDIES BUT INSTEAD JOIN THEM IN DEMONSTRATION.

HE REMINDED THEM THAT THEIR WILD ACTS WOULD NOT ONLY JEOPARDISE THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM OF REDRESSING THE IMBALANCES BETWEEN THE RACES BUT WOULD ENCOURAGE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMUNIST TERRORISTS IN THE JUNGLE BY DIVERTING ATTENTION OF THE SECURITY PROCES FROM THE TERRORISTS TO RESTORING PEACE IN THE CAMPUSES.

DR. MAHATHIR WARNED THAT ANYONE ACTING IN ANY WAY THAT COULD HELP THE COMMUNIST TERRORISTS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY MUST BE PREPARED TO FACE THE LEGAL CONSEQUENCES.

THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ACT IN EARNEST AND WAS NOT JUST PLAYING +ABOUT+.

ANY UNLAWFUL ACTS TO OPPOSE THE LAW AND THOSE THAT COULD WEAKEN THE STABILITY OF THE COUNTRY WOULD BE DEALT WITH PROPERLY AND PROMPTLY. — BERNAMA MORE 2000/SZ

110

(F)

116s

PARLIAMENT-UNIVERSITY 3 KUALA LUMPUR

→ DR. MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD ANTICIPATED CRITICISMS OF THE AMENDMENTS FROM GROUPS WITHIN OR OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY CLAIMING TO BE CHAMPIONS OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM.

THE GROUPS, HE SAID, WERE UNDER THE MISCONCEPTION THAT ACADEMIC FREEDOM MEANT THAT THEY WERE EXEMPTED FROM THE LAWS OF THE STATE.

HE REITERATED THAT ACADEMIC FREEDOM DID NOT MEAN THAT THOSE WORKING AND RESIDING IN UNIVERSITIES WERE ABOVE THE LAW.

+THIS ALSO DOES NOT MEAN THAT CRIMINAL OFFENCES CAN BE CARRIED OUT IN UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES, FREE FROM THE LEGAL PROCESS OF THE COUNTRY, + HE ADDED.

DR. MAHATHIR SAID ACADEMIC FREEDOM ALSO DID NOT MEAN THAT THE CAMPUSES COULD BE USED TO PLAN AND TRAIN PEOPLE TO CREATE CHAOS IN OR OUTSIDE THE CAMPUSES OR THROUGHOUT THE NATION.

HE EMPHASISED THAT THERE WERE NO RESTRICTIONS ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN THIS COUNTRY.

+THE AMENDMENTS+, HE SAID, +ONLY INVOLVE THE UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES WHO IN THE PAST HAD BEEN UNABLE TO OVERCOME THEIR INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS+. — BERNAMA MORE 2004/SZ

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122s

PARLIAMENT-UNIVERSITY 4 KUALA LUMPUR

→ HE SAID THE LAW NEED NOT BE ENFORCED IF THE PUBLIC COULD VOLUNTARILY MAINTAIN AND PRESERVE THE PEACE.

DR. MAHATHIR STRESSED THAT ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT HAD SUCCEEDED IN REDRESSING THE IMBALANCE IN EDUCATION, THERE WERE STILL MANY PEOPLE WHO WERE IGNORANT OR HAD DELIBERATELY IGNORED NATIONAL INTEREST.

THESE PEOPLE WERE ALWAYS TRYING TO PREVENT BUMIPUTRAS FROM RECEIVING EDUCATION AND OF LATE THEY HAD CONCENTRATED THEIR EFFORTS ON UTILISING STUDENT POWER FOR THEIR OWN POLITICAL ENDS.

+AS A RESULT, NO OTHER ACTIVITIES BESIDES DEMONSTRATION CAN NOW BE HEARD IN THE UNIVERSITIES, + HE ADDED.

THE MINISTER REGRETTED THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF BUMIPUTRA STUDENTS WERE INVOLVED IN LAST YEAR'S DEMONSTRATIONS.

THEY SHOULD REALISE THAT THEY HAD BEEN LEFT FAR BEHIND IN EDUCATION AND THAT ONLY EDUCATION COULD HELP THEM TO PROGRESS.

DR. MAHATHIR SAID THE STUDENTS HAD NOT ONLY TAKEN OVER THE CAMPUS BUT ALSO OUSTED THE UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES.

A DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT WOULD BE FAILING IN ITS RESPONSIBILITIES IF IT DID NOT OVERSEE THE PROPER USAGE OF PUBLIC FUNDS AND PROPERTIES.

HE ASSURED THAT THE AMMENDMENTS WOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH STUDENTS OR THE ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION F KNOWLEDGE.

— BERNAMA MORE 2029/MD

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124:

PARLIAMENT-UNIVERSITY 5 KUALA LUMPUR

→ HE SAID: +THE LAWS ARE ONLY DIRECTED TOWARDS PREVENTING THE UNAUTHORISED USE OR ABUSE OF UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR PREMISES FOR PURPOSES OTHER THAN WHAT IS GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD AS ACADEMIC.

+THERE IS THEREFORE NO GROUNDS OTHER THAN THOSE OF PRIDE AND PRIVILEGE FOR ACADEMICS TO PROTEST AGAINST THIS LAW.

+ACADEMICS CANNOT CONSIDER THEMSELVES AS A RACE APART AND EXEMPTED FROM THE STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR EXPECTED OF THE OTHER CITIZENS.+

DR. MAHATHIR SAID IN THE PAST THE GOVERNMENT HAD SUBSCRIBED TO A LIBERAL ATTITUDE ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WERE MATURE AND AWARE OF THEIR OBLIGATIONS.

HOWEVER, OF LATE IT WAS EVIDENT THAT SOME OF THEM WERE IRRESPONSIBLE AND WERE NOT AWARE OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR ACTIONS.

THE GOVERNMENT, THEREFORE, COULD NOT TREAT SUCH ACTIONS LIGHTLY, HE ADDED.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS FULLY AWARE OF SOME STUDENTS WHO WERE DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THE COMMUNISTS.

THE GOVERNMENT, HE ADDED, WAS ALSO AWARE OF THE NEED TO KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON THE ACTIVITIES OF STUDENTS WHO ON THE SURFACE WERE UNSYMPATHETIC TOWARDS THE COMMUNISTS BUT COULD IN ONE WAY OR OTHER ASSIST THEM. --BERNAMA MORE 2036/MD

129:

PARLIAMENT-UNIVERSITIES 6 KUALA LUMPUR

→ DR. TAN CHEE KHOON (PEKEMAS-KEPONG) SAID THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE BILL WERE MUCH WIDER THAN ITS REPRESSIVE EFFECTS ON THE UNIVERSITIES AND ON THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COUNTRY.

THE BILL POSED A CHALLENGE TO LIBERTIES, AND YOUTHS WERE REQUIRED TO GIVE UP FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT AS CITIZENS IN EXCHANGE FOR THE OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.

DR. TAN CLAIMED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD MISJUDGED THE MOOD AND TEMPER OF THE STUDENTS.

THE +REPRESSIVE MEASURES+ WOULD NOT CURB STUDENT POLITICAL ACTIVITIES BUT WOULD HARDEN THEIR ATTITUDE.

+IF THEY CANNOT CONDUCT THEIR ACTIVITIES OPENLY, THEY WILL JUST GO UNDERGROUND AND THUS WILL ENTAIL FAR MORE WORK FOR SPECIAL BRANCH THAN LOOKING AFTER THE OVERT ACTIVITIES OF THE STUDENTS,+ HE SAID.

HE ALSO SAID THE BILL DID NOT ONLY DESTROY THE AUTONOMY OF THE UNIVERSITIES BUT ALSO DEPRIVED THE YOUTH OF THEIR FREEDOM AND +REDUCES UNIVERSITY TEACHERS TO THE STATUS OF HACKS IN THE SERVICE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN POWER.+ --BERNAMA MORE 2104/MD

130:

PARLIAMENT-UNIVERSITY 7 KUALA LUMPUR

→ THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT, DR. GON CHENG TEIK SAID THE BILL WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE DECLINE OF DISCIPLINE IN SOME CAMPUSES.

AS A FORMER LECTURER, HE SAID, HE KNEW AT FIRST HAND WHAT THE STATE OF DISCIPLINE WAS LIKE AT LEAST AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA.

HE RECALLED THAT STUDENTS COULD GET ON TO THE ROSTRUM AND ATTACK THEIR LECTURERS, PROFESSORS, DEANS AND THE VICE-CHANCELLOR. STUDENTS COULD DEMAND (AND OFTEN THESE DEMANDS WERE MET) THAT LECTURES AND TUTORIALS BE CANCELLED TO ENABLE THEM TO HOLD MASS RALLIES DURING LECTURE HOURS.

HE SAID THE PRESENT AMENDMENT SEEKS TO EMPOWER THE UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION TO DEAL WITH THOSE STUDENTS WHO DEMAND A LICENSE TO PRACTICE HOOLIGANISMS IN THE NAME OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM.

HE SAID THE RIGHT TO DISSENT WAS NOT IMPAIRED AS THE STUDENTS COULD EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON GREAT NATIONAL ISSUES THROUGH THE WRITTEN WORD. -- BERNAMA MORE 2133/ZCM

131:

PARLIAMENT-UNIVERSITY 8 KUALA LUMPUR

TO THE TEACHING STAFF WHO FELT THAT THE BILL GIVES EXTRA POWERS TO THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, HE URGED THEM TO APPRECIATE THAT IT WAS INTENDED TO HALT THE PRESENT DRIFT TOWARDS DISORDER IN THE CAMPUSES AND NOT FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSES.

HE ALSO URGED THEM TO COOPERATE IN RESTORING DISCIPLINE AND RESPECT FOR THE AUTHORITY IN THE STUDENTS RANK SO THAT THESE UNPLEASANT MEASURES WHICH THE BILL SEEKS TO INTRODUCE CAN BECOME A TEMPORARY NECESSITY.

HE FELT THAT WHEN STUDENTS' DISCIPLINE AT THE CAMPUSES RETURNS TO NORMAL, THIS PARTICULAR AMENDMENT WILL LOSE ITS RAISON D'ETRE AND IS LIKELY TO WITHER AWAY.

HE SAID THE EDUCATION MINISTER SHOULD ENSURE THAT INCENTIVE BASED ON MERITS ARE RESTORED IN FULL TO THE RANKS OF THE TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF.

HE ALSO URGED THE MINISTER TO PROVIDE CHANNELS FOR STUDENTS TO TRANSMIT LEGITIMATE GRIEVANCES AGAINST THE UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION TO HIM. SEVERAL STUDENTS DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS HAD THEIR ORIGINS IN ADMINISTRATIVE NEGLIGENCE. -- BERNAMA MORE 2137/ZCM

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132:

PARLIAMENT-UNIVERSITIES 9 KUALA LUMPUR

HAJI EMBONG YAHYA (BN-LEDANG) DESCRIBED THE BILL AS JUST AND TIMELY AS IT WOULD PREVENT STUDENTS FROM GETTING INVOLVED IN POLITICAL PARTIES INCLUDING THE PARTY IN POWER.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE SAME CONDITIONS BE IMPOSED ON LECTURERS AS HE FELT THERE WERE LECTURERS, WHO HAVING LOST IN ELECTIONS, TURNED THE LECTURE ROOMS INTO A POLITICAL ARENA TO CRITICISE THE GOVERNMENT. -- BERNAMA MORE 2217/ZCM

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133:

PARLIAMENT-UNIVERSITY 10 KUALA LUMPUR

DR. HEE TIEN LAI (BN-AYER HITAM) URGED THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION TO EXERCISE WITH UNDERSTANDING AND TOLERANCE THE POWERS VESTED IN HIM BY THE NEW AMENDMENTS.

HE ALSO URGED THE VICE-CHANCELLOR TO USE HIS DISCRETION FAIRLY AND JUSTLY IN EXERCISING HIS POWER TO APPROVE DESERVING AND GENUINE STUDENTS WHO WISHED TO PARTICIPATE IN SOCIETIES AND ASSOCIATIONS WITHIN OR OUTSIDE UNIVERSITY.

HE CONGRATULATED THE GOVERNMENT FOR INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY OF THE STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL IN THE UNIVERSITY'S COURT. HE FELT HOWEVER, THAT A BIGGER VOICE SHOULD BE GIVEN TO ORGANISED STUDENTS OPINION.

TENGGU NOR AISHAH BINTI TENGGU AHMAD (BN-TUMPAT) SAID THE BILL SHOULD BE WELCOMED BY THE PEOPLE AS IT WOULD HELP TO OVERCOME THE PRESENT PROBLEMS IN THE CAMPUSES.

SHE CRITICISED CERTAIN LECTURERS WHO SPOKE VERY CRITICALLY AGAINST THIS COUNTRY IN INTERNATIONAL SEMINARS. -- BERNAMA MORE 2222/ZCM

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134:

PARLIAMENT-UNIVERSITI 11 KUALA LUMPUR

ENCIK ARIFFIN HAJI DAUD (BN-PERMATANG PAUH), SAID ALTHOUGH THE AMENDMENTS WERE RATHER STIFF, THEY WERE TIMELY IN VIEW OF THE UNHEALTHY TRENDS AMONG STUDENTS AT PRESENT.

HE HOPED HOWEVER, THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER ALLOWING OFFICERS OR STAFFS OF UNIVERSITIES TO APPEAL TO THE HIGH COURT ON MATTERS WITH WHICH THEY WERE NOT SATISFIED AND NOT ONLY TO THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL AS PROVIDED BY THE AMENDMENT.

HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT A PROVISION BE MADE ALLOWING ACTION AGAINST PEOPLE WHO ENTERED UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES TO INSTIGATE STUDENTS. -- BERNAMA MORE 2227/ZCM

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136:

PARLIAMENT-UNIVERSITIES 12 KUALA LUMPUR

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND ATTORNEY GENERAL, TAN SRI KADIR YUSOF, REPLYING TO POINTS RAISED DURING THE DEBATE REFUTED ALLEGATIONS BY DR. TAN THAT THE HEAD OF THE SPECIAL BRANCH WAS A DICTATOR.

HE SAID, THE COUNTRY SHOULD BE THANKFUL TO THE SPECIAL BRANCH HEAD AND ITS OFFICERS FOR THEIR GOOD WORK IN KEEPING THE NATION SAFE.

THE SEPCIAL BRANCH HEAD IS A RESPONSIBLE MAN AND DOES NOT CARRY OUT HIS TASK ACCORDING TO HIS WHIMS AND FANCIES, HE STRESSED. -- BERNAMA MORE 2248/ZCM

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PARLIAMENT-UNIVERSITY 13 KUALA LUMPUR

WINDING UP THE DEBATE, DR. MAHATHIR POINTED OUT THAT THE BILL WAS NOT AIMED AT SUPPRESSING THE STUDENTS.

HE SAID THAT HE WAS AWARE THAT MOST OF THE STUDENTS DID NOT WANT TO ACT UNCONSTITUTIONALLY AND THAT THE NEW LAWS WERE AIMED AT PROTECTING THESE STUDENTS.

DR. MAHATHIR SAID UNDER THE PRESENT SYSTEM THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT EFFECTIVELY CONTROL THE ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES.

FOR INSTANCE, UNDERGRADUATES WERE GIVEN THE CHANCE TO MOULD THE IDENTITY OF FRESHIES DURING THE ORIENTATION WEEKS.

ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, HE ADDED, THE UNDERGRADUATES USED THE FRESHIES FOR THEIR OWN INTERESTS AND AS A RESULT THE LATTER COULD NOT CONCENTRATE ON THEIR STUDIES.

DR. MAHATHIR SAID WITH THE NEW LAWS THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT ONLY BE ABLE TO KEEP TRACK OF THE STUDENTS' ACTIVITIES BUT ALSO CONTROL THEM. -- BERNAMA MORE 2259/ZCM

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138:

PARLIAMENT-UNIVERSITY 14 KUALA LUMPUR

THE MINISTER RULED OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF THE BILL TURNING STUDENTS INTO MERE ROBOTS AS THEY WOULD BE SUBJECT TO CERTAIN RULES AND REGULATIONS.

+INSTEAD, TALKS HELD IN THE CAMPUSES ARE MORE DESTRUCTIVE BECAUSE AS A RESULT OF SUCH TALKS MANY OF THE STUDENTS WERE INFLUENCED AND DID NOT WANT TO ACCEPT REALITIES, + HE SAID.

ON SUGGESTIONS THAT MORE DIALOGUES AND FORUMS BE HELD WITH THE STUDENTS TO RESOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS, DR. MAHATHIR SAID SUCH EFFORTS WOULD BE FRUITLESS IF THE STUDENTS REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS AND OPINIONS.

+I HAVE OFTEN ATTENDED STUDENTS' FORUMS AND DIALOGUES AND ON MOST OCCASIONS WERE BOOED BY THEM, + HE ADDED.

+I REGARD BOOING AS NORMAL BUT SUCH FUNCTIONS WILL BE USELESS IF THEY WERE ONLY INTENDED TO BOO AND JEER AT THE GUEST SPEAKERS. +

DR. MAHATHIR REITERATED THAT THE BILL WOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE AUTONOMY OF UNIVERSITIES AS THEY WOULD CONTINUE TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES.

THE BILL WAS ONLY AIMED AT PREVENTING UNCONSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES, HE SAID.

THE BILL WAS PASSED AT 10.45 P.M. AFTER A FIVE-HOUR DEBATE. -- BERNAMA 2317/ZCM