

KUALA LUMPUR, OCT. 10 (BERNAMA) -- THE GOVERNMENT IS INVESTIGATING SAMAD ISMAIL'S CLAIM OF INFLUENCE OVER CERTAIN GROUPS IN UMNO, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMED SAID TODAY.

+WE ARE LOOKING FOR EVIDENCE TO ESTABLISH IF THERE IS ANY TRUTH TO THE ALLEGATIONS,+ HE SAID IN REFERENCE TO CALLS TO RID UMNO AND THE GOVERNMENT OF POSSIBLE COMMUNIST AGENTS.

THE ISSUE WOULD BE DISCUSSED AT THE UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULED TO BE HELD ON OCT. 23. THE MEETING WOULD ALSO DECIDE THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE'S FINDINGS ON DATUK HARUN IDRIS' APPLICATION TO REJOIN UMNO.

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER WAS SPEAKING TO NEWSMEN AFTER OPENING THE MALAYSIAN CEYLONESE CONGRESS ANNUAL ASSEMBLY IN PETALING JAYA.

HE SCOTCHED RUMOURS THAT A CABINET RESHUFFLE WAS IMMINENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND SAID: +I CERTAINLY DO NOT KNOW OF ANY PLAN FOR ONE.

+I CANNOT GO BEYOND THAT. I CAN'T SEE INTO DATUK HUSSEIN ONN'S MIND AS HE HAS SOLE RIGHT TO DECIDE ON THIS.+ -- BERNAMA MORE 1345/YF

DR. MAHATHIR SAID HE AGREED THAT UMNO MUST RID ITSELF OF POSSIBLE COMMUNISTS OR THEIR AGENTS BUT THAT THE PARTY, BY ITSELF, WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE WHO WERE COMMUNISTS BECAUSE IT DID NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO CALL UP WITNESSES AND SO ON.

HE SAID THERE WAS NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN HIS STAND THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST CARRY OUT THE INVESTIGATIONS AND CALLS BY OTHER UMNO OFFICIALS FOR A 'CLEAN-UP' OF THE PARTY.

HE ALSO COMMENTED ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S BATTLE AGAINST COMMUNIST INSURGENTS.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED TO TOLERATE SOCIALISTS AS LONG AS THEY UPHELD THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY AND DID NOT COMMIT THEMSELVES TO THE OVERTHROW OF THE GOVERNMENT BY VIOLENT MEANS.

BUT IF THEY JOINED THE COMMUNISTS OR SUPPORTED THEM IN SEEKING VIOLENT CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TREAT THEM THE SAME WAY AS IT TREATED THE COMMUNISTS. -- BERNAMA MORE 1350 YF

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+THEN IT WOULD NOT MATTER WHETHER THEY CALLED THEMSELVES SOCIALISTS OR WHATEVER,+ HE SAID.

ASKED ABOUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SAMAD'S DETENTION AND THAT OF THE TWO SINGAPORE JOURNALISTS--HUSSEIN JAHIDIN AND AZMI MAHMUD--WHO HAVE SINCE BEEN RELEASED, HE SAID, +WE DO NOT DEPEND ON WHAT SINGAPORE DOES.+

THE SINGAPORE JOURNALISTS COULD HAVE BEEN RELEASED BECAUSE THEY CONFESSED AND GAVE THE GOVERNMENT INFORMATION, HE SAID.

IN SAMAD'S CASE, IT WAS UP TO THE POLICE TO DETERMINE FROM THEIR INVESTIGATIONS WHETHER HE SHOULD BE RELEASED IF HE NO LONGER POSED A THREAT TO THE COUNTRY.

DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT THE COMMUNIST THREAT TO THE COUNTRY WAS SERIOUS, AND THAT WAS WHY HE WAS URGING CONSTANT VIGILANCE BY THE PEOPLE.

+IF WE RELAX EVEN A LITTLE BIT, THEY WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT,+ HE SAID. -- BERNAMA 1352/YF