

NOC-type rule if crisis is not solved

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By RUHANIE AHMAD

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — An emergency-type administration, like the National Operations Council headed by the late Tun Abdul Razak in 1969, may be set up in Kelantan if the political crisis there remains unsolved.

Deputy Prime Minister Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad said today this was one of the recommendations in the latest formula devised to solve the crisis. He handed the formula to PAS National President Datuk Haji Mohamed Asri bin Haji Muda two days ago.

The political crisis there, if prolonged, would affect the State's peace and stability and the security situation.

It would also jeopardise development and economic progress in Kelantan, he added.

"I believe that the people, as well as members of Umno and PAS, do not wish to see development programmes hampered, as they may be if the crisis drags on," he said.

Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir was answering questions by newsmen whether the setting up of an emergency administration was included in the latest formula for a settlement.

First formula

He also said the first formula which he conveyed to Kelantan PAS leaders last Saturday required all the five State Executive Council members from PAS to step down.

It did not request the three State Executive Council members from Umno to do so since they were regarded as not being involved in the crisis.

"But PAS leaders made a counter-proposal by requesting that the three Umno members should also step down. This has been agreed to by the Umno top leadership," he added.

On the appointment of the new Mentri Besar, Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir said that normally this would be the responsibility of the National Front top leaders.

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"This is the normal practice in keeping with the National Front spirit," he said.

(The secretary of the Kelantan PAS Liaison Committee, Encik Salahuddin Abdullah, said yesterday that there was a strong possibility that the committee would accept the latest formula.

The committee would meet and discuss this matter early next week, he added.)

'Unhealthy'

Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir regarded the apparent current political trend in Malaysia for State Assemblymen to pass votes of no confidence in Mentri Besar or Chief Ministers as "unhealthy."

"However, we are not going to use force to solve the problem as we hope that political leaders in the National Front component parties will realise their responsibilities towards the people and the nation.

"The people will eventually evaluate the actions of leaders who move such motions at their whims and fancies," he added.

He said leaders in the National Front should also realise that they joined the organisation voluntarily in the interest of the nation as well as to reduce politicking.

To a question whether an allegation that some members of the Umno Supreme Council wanted to see PAS leave the National Front, Dr. Mahathir said:

"Such an attitude may exist in all component parties of the National Front. The important thing is whether it is acceptable to the majority."

Asked if it was true that students took part in the recent demonstrations in Kelantan, Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir who is also the Education Minister said:

"I do not deny this fact, but most of them might have joined the demonstrations out of curiosity. We are still investigating whether they were directly involved."

Students held

"If it was found that they directly participated in the demonstrations, the Ministry will then invoke the Universities and University Colleges Act."

Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir also said that several students were arrested recently. Two of them had been questioned by the authorities.

However, he added, the authorities were still not certain whether they were directly involved in the demonstrations.