

MAHATHIR

80 P

KUALA LUMPUR, OCT. 21 (BERNAMA) — THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN ONLY INTERVENE IN THE RELIGIOUS MATTERS OF ANY STATE IF CRIMINAL LAWS HAVE BEEN BROKEN, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

~~ONLY WHEN THE PEOPLE USE RELIGION FOR CRIMINAL PURPOSES CAN~~ THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INTERVENE, OTHERWISE, RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS COME UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE VARIOUS STATE GOVERNMENTS, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR, WHO IS ALSO MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY, WAS SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER VISITING THE AFIA KUALA KUALA LUMPUR INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE FAIR '80, AT THE CHANGKAT PAVILION HERE TODAY. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE, DATIN SERI DR. SITI HASMAH.

HE WAS COMMENTING ON A STATEMENT MADE BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN ON THE RECENT ATTACK ON THE BATU PAHAT POLICE STATION BY RELIGIOUS FANATICS.

TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN HAD SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT REVIEW THE CONSTITUTION AND PROVIDE ITSELF WITH POWERS TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST DEVIATIONISTS AND FANATICAL MOVEMENTS. —BERNAMA MORE 2046/BY

MAHATHIR 2 KUALA LUMPUR

+FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE OVER THE STATES' POWERS ON RELIGIOUS MATTER WILL DEPEND ON THE AGREEMENT OF THE STATE LEGISLATURES, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID.

ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF THREE KAMPUCHEANS IN THE ATTACK, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT AS FAR AS THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONCERNED, THESE REFUGEES WERE NOT SETTLERS, BUT WERE HERE MERELY ON TRANSIT.

+THEY COULD HAVE BEEN MALAYSIANS WHO HAD GONE TO STAY IN KAMPUCHEA, OR RELATIVES OF MALAYSIANS. THIS WOULD EXPLAIN THEIR BEING ABLE TO SPEAK MALAY SO WELL, HE SAID.

+THE GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE SURE THAT THEY DO NOT RUN WILD AND MEDDLE IN LOCAL POLITICAL OR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, HE ADDED.

SAYING THAT THERE WAS ALWAYS SUCH LUNATIC FRINGES IN ALL SOCIETIES, INCLUDING CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ADDED THAT +THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE WILL LET IT EXPLODE INTO A SERIOUS SITUATION+. —BERNAMA MORE 2049/BY

NO67 (F)

MAHATHIR 3 KUALA LUMPUR

+IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE WHICH DAKWAH GROUP IS GENUINE AND WHICH IS NOT, AND IF THE GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN ACTION AGAINST THIS GROUP EARLIER, THEN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OF SUPPRESSING DAKWAH, WHEREAS ALL WE CARE FOR IS THE SAFETY OF THE PEOPLE, HE SAID.

THUS, THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN FORCED TO WAIT FOR PEOPLE TO BE WOUNDED BEFORE IT COULD TAKE ACTION, HE ADDED.

+IT IS ALSO DIFFICULT TO TELL WHICH GROUP MAY BECOME VIOLENT, BUT THE GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE SURE THAT THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN DAKWAH ARE REALLY DAKWAH, AND NOT USING IT TO HIDE OTHER ACTIVITIES, LIKE TRAINING TO USE WEAPONS TO ATTACK PEOPLE+, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID.

86

ON LOCAL FURNITURE, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THE MAIN PROBLEM IT FACED WAS PRODUCTION AND THE SECURING OF MARKETS.

HE ENCOURAGED THE PEOPLE PLANT RUBBER WHICH COULD LATER BE USED TO MAKE RUBBER WOOD FURNITURE. --BERNAMA MORE 2054/BY

NO68 (F)
MAHATHIR 4 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ALSO ENCOURAGED MALAYSIANS TO EXPLOIT THE HAND-MADE FURNITURE MARKET WHERE THERE WERE FEW EXPORTERS AS COMPARED TO MACHINE-MADE FURNITURE.

DESCRIBING THE PRICES OF LOCAL FURNITURE AS DISPLAYED AT THE FAIR AS +VERY CHEAP WHEN COMPARED TO PRICES IN OTHER COUNTRIES, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID: +THE QUALITY AND DESIGN HAS IMPROVED+.

+WE HAVE THE RAW MATERIALS AND THE SKILLS, SO I DON'T SEE WHY WE SHOULD BE BEHIND TIME+, HE ADDED. --BERNAMA 2056/BY