

N212: (F)  
PM-RECOLLECT  
BM

82 (P)  
ALOR STAR, APRIL 14 (BERNAMA) -- (DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TONIGHT RECOLLECTED THE PEACE AND AMITY PREVAILING AMONG MUSLIMS IN THE COUNTRY WHEN PAS WAS IN THE BARISAN NASIONAL IN 1973 AND 1974.

"THE SITUATION SHOULD HAVE ENDURED BECAUSE MUSLIMS ARE REQUIRED TO BE ON GOOD TERMS WITH ONE ANOTHER," HE SAID.

"UNFORTUNATELY PAS LEADERS - NOT THE MEMBERS - CHOOSE TO WANT MUSLIMS TO FALL OUT AMONG THEMSELVES."

THE PRIME MINISTER MADE THESE REMARKS WHEN WELCOMING A DELEGATION OF PAS MEMBERS THAT CALLED ON HIM AT HIS RESIDENCE HERE TO ANNOUNCE THEIR RESIGNATION FROM THE PARTY.

HE SAID THAT WHEN PAS WAS IN THE BN, THERE WAS THE BEST OF COOPERATION AND CORDIALITY AMONG MUSLIMS.

BUT AFTER PAS LEFT THE BN, "EVEN I AND MY WIFE HAVE BEEN CALLED JEWS BY PAS PEOPLE."

HE FELT THAT THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG WITH PAS POLICIES - THE PROBLEM WAS THE MEANS BY WHICH THE POLICIES WERE IMPLEMENTED. --

BERNAMA MORE 0140/LK

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"MINDFUL OF THE NEED TO RESTORE GOOD RELATIONS AMONG MUSLIMS, I MADE OFFERS TO PAS TO RETURN TO THE BARISAN NASIONAL FOLD BUT MY OFFERS WERE REJECTED OUT OF HAND BY PAS PRESIDENT DATUK MOHAMAD ASRI MUDA."

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR STRESSED THAT MALAYS SHOULD REINFORCE THEIR UNITY IF THEY WISHED TO STRENGTHEN THEIR POSITION.

"IN VIEW OF THIS, IT IS GOOD IF PAS RETURNS TO THE BARISAN NASIONAL."

RELUCTANCE OF PAS LEADERS TO RETURN TO THE BARISAN NASIONAL REFLECTED THEIR INTENTION OF WANTING THE MALAYS TO BE DIVIDED WHEN UMNO ON THE OTHER HAND WAS PUSHING FOR UNITY.

HE ALSO SAID MALAYSIA WAS RECOGNISED AS AN ISLAMIC COUNTRY DESPITE HAVING NON-MUSLIMS IN THE TOP ADMINISTRATION LEVEL. --  
BERNAMA MORE 0145/LK

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PAS ASSERTIONS THAT AN ISLAMIC COUNTRY COULD NOT HAVE NON-MUSLIMS AS LEADERS WERE A MISCONCEPTION BECAUSE SAUDI ARABIA, AN ISLAMIC COUNTRY, ALSO HAD LEADERS WHO WERE NOT MUSLIMS, HE SAID.

"EXISTENCE OF NON-MUSLIMS IN OUR MIDST DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE ARE NOT ISLAMIC SO LONG AS THEY WANT PEACE," HE ADDED.

HE HOPED MORE PAS SUPPORTERS JOINED UMNO ONCE THEY REALISED THAT UMNO ALSO BASED ITS STRUGGLES ON ISLAM.

ALSO PRESENT AT THE MEETING WITH 300 FORMER PAS LEADERS AND MEMBERS WERE DATIN SERI DR. SITI HASMAH AND UMNO LEADERS FROM KUBANG PASU, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR'S CONSTITUENCY. -- BERNAMA 0150/LK