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KUALA LUMPUR, AUG. 19 (BERNAMA) -- (DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY WARNED SENIOR AIDES OR LIEUTENANTS TO CERTAIN UMNO LEADERS ASPIRING FOR PARTY OR GOVERNMENT POSTS AGAINST BEING SO CARRIED AWAY BY THEIR MANOEUVRING AS TO BE HEEDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES TO THE PARTY.

IN HIS SPEECH OPENING THE UMNO MALAYSIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY HERE, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE POSITIONS OF THESE LIEUTENANTS IN THE GOVERNMENT WERE NOT ALL THAT SECURE.

"SO, BE CAREFUL," HE WARNED. HIS STATEMENT WAS GREETED WITH THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE BY ABOUT 1,300 DELEGATES AT THE ASSEMBLY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS ALSO UMNO MALAYSIA PRESIDENT, SAID THESE CAMPAIGNS WERE OSTENSIBLY IN THE NAME OF DEMOCRACY BUT WERE CARRIED OUT WITHOUT DUE REGARD FOR CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS.

"THEY KNOW NO LIMIT AND BOUNDS IN THEIR CAMPAIGNING. THE FACT THAT THEIR ACTION MIGHT RESULT IN DISINTEGRATION OF THE PARTY DOES NOT BOTHER THEM AT ALL.

"THIS IS WHY THEY STARTED PLANNING AND LAUNCHING THEIR CAMPAIGN FOR THE LAST UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL ELECTIONS ABOUT TWO YEARS IN ADVANCE."

-- MORE 1632/LK

MAHATHIR-WARNING 2 KUALA LUMPUR

HE REMINDED THE DELEGATES THAT UMNO BELONGED TO ALL PARTY MEMBERS IN WHOSE HANDS LAY THE POWER TO DETERMINE ITS RISE OR FALL.

THE LEADERSHIP ONLY HELD POWER IN TRUST THROUGH THE HIGHEST POWER-MAKING FORUM, THE PARTY GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

HE TOLD THEM TO ALWAYS EXERCISE CARE SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT HAVE CAUSE FOR REGRET LATER. THIS WOULD BE PARTICULARLY RELEVANT IN 1984 WHEN THE NEXT PARTY ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD.

HE SAID THAT FOR HIMSELF, HIS POSITION AS PRESIDENT OF UMNO WAS IMPORTANT ONLY IN THAT IT ALLOWED HIM TO ENSURE THAT INTERESTS OF THE PARTY WERE PROTECTED TOGETHER WITH INTERESTS OF ISLAM AND THE COUNTRY.

+WHAT IS OF PARAMOUNT CONCERN AND IMPORTANCE IS NOT MYSELF BUT UMNO. ALL THAT I DO, I DO FOR UMNO AND, BY EXTENSION, FOR THE MALAYS, ISLAM AND THE COUNTRY+.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR BEING BLESSED WITH ABLE COLLEAGUES IN CARRYING OUT HIS TASKS AS UMNO PRESIDENT AND MALAYSIA PRIME MINISTER.

--MORE 1722/AN

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MAHATHIR-WARNING 3 KUALA LUMPUR

HE SAID THAT APART FROM HAVING DATUK MUSA HITAM AS THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF UMNO AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, HE ALSO HAD AN EFFECTIVE TEAM TO WORK OUT AND EFFECT CHANGES REGARDED AS CRUCIAL FOR THE WELL-BEING OF THE NATION.

+I THANK THE DELEGATES OF THE 1981 ASSEMBLY WHO ELECTED A DEPUTY PRESIDENT WHO CAN WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM WITH ME. THIS COOPERATION HAS MADE THE LEADERSHIP MORE EFFECTIVE+, HE ADDED.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID EVERY UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL MEMBER AND MINISTER HAD AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN THEIR RESPECTIVE CAPACITIES.

HE ALSO SAID THAT DESPITE PREDICTIONS OF A MAJOR CABINET RESHUFFLE, THE CHANGES MADE WERE FEW APART FROM THE FILLING IN OF VACANCIES.

+CHANGES ARE NOT MADE FOR THE SAKE OF CHANGE BECAUSE STABILITY IS OF PARAMOUNT CONSIDERATION+.

HE STRESSED THAT EXERCISE OF POWER WAS MADE NOT BECAUSE POWER WAS AVAILABLE BUT WHEN POWER WAS REQUIRED TO BE USED.

--MORE 1725/AN

MAHATHIR - WARNING 4 KUALA LUMPUR

THE PRINCIPLE WAS THE SAME AS FOR THE SYSTEM OF DEMOCRACY, HE ADDED. POWER, LIKE RIGHTS, MUST BE USED RESPONSIBLY AND WISELY. HE REITERATED THAT TEAM SPIRIT WAS ESSENTIAL IF THE TEAM WANTED TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

THE TEAMWORK WOULD FAIL IF ANY MEMBER OF THE TEAM NURTURED INDIVIDUAL AMBITIONS AND DISREGARDED TEAM INTERESTS.

HE ALSO STRONGLY CONDEMNED THE HABIT OF SLANDERING OTHER PEOPLE, WHICH, HE SAID, WAS RAMPANT NOT ONLY IN SOCIETY BUT ALSO AMONG UMNO MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS.

HE QUOTED SEVERAL EXAMPLES OF SLANDEROUS RUMOURS, INCLUDING THE STORIES OF JAPANESE AND SOUTH KOREANS BRIBERY OF CERTAIN PEOPLE AND OF CERTAIN LEADERS MARRYING A SECOND WIFE OR KEEPING A MISTRESS OR BEING A HABITUAL DRINKER.

THE TARGET OF SUCH SLANDER WERE NOT ONLY MINISTERS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS BUT ALSO OTHER PEOPLE IN HIGH PLACES. -- MORE 1833/II

MAHATHIR - WARNING 5 KUALA LUMPUR

HE SAID THE STRANGE THING WAS THAT WHILE EVERYONE KNEW SUCH STORIES TO BE UTTER LIES, WHEN A NEW STORY MADE THE ROUNDS 'WE DO NOT REJECT IT BUT SWALLOW IT WHOLESAL AND THEN PASS IT ON TO OTHERS.'

HE STRESSED THAT MALICIOUS GOSSIP AND DEFAMATION WERE MOST DELETERIOUS TO A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY BECAUSE THEY COULD DESTROY THE PEOPLE'S TRUST IN THE LEADERSHIP AND BRING ABOUT THE DOWNFALL OF THE COUNTRY.

'IF WE BECOME OBSESSED WITH SCANDALMONGERING AND DISTRIBUTION OF LIBELLOUS LEAFLETS, WE WILL NEVER GET ANYTHING DONE SUCCESSFULLY AND IN THE END, THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES WILL SUFFER,' HE SAID.

'IT IS VERY SAID TO KNOW THAT SLANDER IS USED AS A POLITICAL TOOL IN THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN THIS COUNTRY, NOT ONLY IN OUR PARTY BUT ALSO BY RIVAL PARTIES WHICH DO NOT HAVE ANY OTHER POLITICAL CAPITAL.' -- BERNAMA 1835/II