

MAHATHIR - REACTION

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KUALA LUMPUR, AUG. 20 (BERNAMA) -- UMNO PRESIDENT (DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD) TODAY WELCOMED CRITICISMS OF HIS SPEECH ENDORSING HIS SUPPORT FOR HIS DEPUTY DATUK MUSA HITAM'S POSITION IN THE PARTY AND SAID HE WILL STATE HIS REASONS FOR HIS ENDORSEMENT TOMORROW.

+WHETHER OR NOT I CAN DEFEND MY SPEECH YESTERDAY, IT'S UP TO THE DELEGATES TO JUDGE,+ THE PRIME MINISTER SAID.

+IF WHAT I SAID IS WRONG, THEN I HAVE TO REALISE THAT I AM WRONG AND CORRECT IT AND IF I AM RIGHT, I WILL TRY TO PERSUADE THE UMNO MEMBERS THAT I AM RIGHT,+ HE TOLD REPORTERS AT THE UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

HE WAS COMMENTING ON THE REACTION BY UMNO MEMBERS DURING THE DEBATE WHO HIT OUT AT HIS OPEN DECLARATION OF SUPPORT FOR DATUK MUSA HITAM.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, IN HIS SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE ASSEMBLY, THANKED THE DELEGATES FOR CHOOSING DATUK MUSA AS DEPUTY PRESIDENT DURING THE 1981 PARTY ELECTIONS SAYING THAT DATUK MUSA CAN WORK WITH HIM AS A TEAM.

ASKED WHETHER HE COULD ACCEPT THE CRITICISMS LEVELLED AGAINST HIM, HE SAID: +I'M LISTENING TO THE FEELINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS MADE BY THE MEMBERS AND WHETHER I CAN ACCEPT IT OR NOT, I WILL EXPLAIN TOMORROW.+ -- MORE 1445/MB.

ZCZC NO32 (F/S).

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THE PRIME MINISTER MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE WHOLE EXERCISE OF THE UMNO ASSEMBLY WAS TO HAVE DIALOGUES BETWEEN THE LEADERS AND THE REPRESENTATIVES.

+IF MY SPEECHES WERE ACCEPTED IN TOTO THEN IT'S NOT A DIALOGUE.+

HE ADDED THAT AS IN THE PAST ASSEMBLIES THE DELEGATES WERE GIVEN A CHANCE TO LASH OUT AT THE LEADERSHIP IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE LEADERSHIP WERE NOT +DIRECTORS OF THE PEOPLE+ BUT LEADERS CHOSEN BY THE PEOPLE.

+AS SUCH, EVERYONE IS FREE TO SAY ANYTHING AGAINST ME OR THE LEADERSHIP AND TO ME IT'S NOTHING.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR FELT THAT IF THERE WAS NO DIALOGUE, THE LEADERSHIP MIGHT GO ASTRAY AND +SUDDENLY LOOKING BACK, YOU FIND THAT NOBODY IS BEHIND YOU.+

+WE HAVE TO HAVE CONTACT AND AS WE CAN'T GO ROUND TO EVERY DIVISION AND BRANCH, THE ASSEMBLY IS THE BEST PLATFORM WHERE EVERYONE IS IN FULL EXPOSURE AND BOTH THE LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERS CAN LISTEN TO EACH OTHER.+

-- MORE 1450/MB

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ASKED WHETHER HIS SPEECH ATTACKING +LIEUTENANTS+ OF THE PARTY FOR CAMPAIGNING FOR THEIR CANDIDATES WOULD HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT, HE SAID: +THERE IS NO PROBLEM AT ALL. I HAVE CALLED PEOPLE UP, I HAVE SCOLDED THEM AND YET I CAN CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THEM.+

+NOTHING WE DO IS OF LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE TO MEMBERS. IF IT IS OF LITTLE CONSEQUENCE I WOULD NOT BOTHER TO TAKE ACTION.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR REGRETTED THAT HIS LABELLING OF LIEUTENANTS HAD BEEN MISINTERPRETED BY SEVERAL MEMBERS THINKING THAT IT WAS LIKE MILITARY TERMS.....

+LIEUTENANT IN FRENCH MEANS IN LIEU OF OWNERS WHEN I MENTIONED THE WORD, IT SIMPLY MEANS A PERSON WHO ASSISTS AND TAKES THE PLACE OF THE OWNER AND I DON'T REFER TO ANY PARTICULAR PERSON.+

+IT'S JUST LIKE MY +MALAYSIA INCORPORATED+ POLICY AND +LOOK EAST+ POLICY WHICH IS MISINTERPRETED. OF COURSE, NOBODY CAN COMPRESS ANY IDEA INTO ONE SINGLE WORD AND IF YOU DO, THEN YOU ARE OPEN TO A LOT OF MISINTERPRETATIONS AS HAD HAPPENED.+

-- MORE 1508/MB

ZCZC NO44 (F/S)

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ASKED WHETHER HIS STATEMENT WOULD HAVE A BACKLASH RESULTING IN MORE CANDIDATES FIELDING TO CONTEST THE 1984 PARTY ELECTIONS; HE REITERATED THAT UMNO WAS A SENSIBLE ORGANIZATION;

+IT HAS NEVER LET PEOPLE DOWN JUST FOR THE SAKE OF CONTESTING AND ULTIMATELY, AT NEXT YEAR'S ELECTION IT'S THE INTEREST OF EVERYBODY THAT COUNTS FOR THE GOOD OF UMNO,+ HE STRESSED. -- BERHAMA 1518 /MB