

KUALA LUMPUR, AUG. 21 (BERNAMA) - (P) DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY GAVE A NEW ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY TO UMNO - TO BUILD A COURAGEOUS SPIRIT AND HEART IN THE MALAYS TO FACE CHALLENGES.

QUOTING THE CHINESE PROVERB, "A JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND MILES BEGINS WITH THE FIRST STEP", THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE FIRST STEP FOR THE MALAYS WAS TO GO FORWARD.

IN HIS REPLY TO POINTS RAISED AT THE UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHICH ENDED HERE THIS EVENING, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR, WHO IS UMNO PRESIDENT, SAID MALAYS MUST SLOUGH OFF ALL FEELINGS OF INFERIORITY IF THEY DID NOT WANT TO CONTINUE TO BE LEFT BEHIND IN PROGRESS.

HE SAID REMARKS BY CERTAIN UMNO LEADERS EXPRESSING RESERVATIONS ABOUT MALAY CAPABILITY TO FACE CHALLENGES, FOR INSTANCE CHALLENGES ARISING FROM THE MOVE INTO THE HEAVY INDUSTRIES AGE, WERE REMINISCENT OF THE MENTALITY OF A PAST ERA.

"FORTY OR FIFTY YEARS AGO MALAYS WERE SAYING THAT AIRCRAFT FLYING WAS BEYOND THE MALAYS AND ONLY FOR THE WHITE MEN", HE SAID.

--MORE 2034/AN

MAHATHIR - ROLE 2 KUALA LUMPUR

"WELL, THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE IN THE SITUATION SINCE THEN".

HE SAID THAT WHEN THE COUNTRY WANTED TO SET UP ITS FIRST UNIVERSITY, THERE WERE SIMILAR DOUBTING THOMASES AMONG THE MALAYS WHO WANTED TO KNOW WHERE THE COUNTRY WAS GOING TO GET THE MALAY STUDENTS FOR IT.

"WHEN THE UNIVERSITY WAS SET UP, MALAYS MADE UP ONLY 20 PER CENT OF THE ENROLMENT BUT NOW, MALAYS ACCOUNT FOR 65 PER CENT OF THE STUDENT POPULATION OF LOCAL UNIVERSITIES."

HE SAID THIS SUCCESS PROVED THAT MALAYS HAD THE CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY TO FACE ANY CHALLENGE BUT WHAT WAS LACKING WAS THE SPIRIT TO DO SO.

"IT IS THEREFORE THE DUTY OF ALL OF US IN UMNO TO BUILD THIS SPIRIT IN OURSELVES, OUR CHILDREN AND OUR PEOPLE," HE ADDED.

THE PRIME MINISTER STRESSED THAT THE CAPABILITIES AND RESOURCES OF THE MALAY WOULD SURFACE WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SPIRIT OF INITIATIVE AND RESOLVE.

MALAYS COULD NOT AFFORD TO TAKE THEIR OWN TIME IN GOING ABOUT THIS OBJECTIVE BUT MUST ACT NOW.

-- MORE 2140/PA

MAHATHIR-ROLE 3 KUALA LUMPUR

HE SAID THAT AS A MALAY, HE HAD HIGH HOPES FOR THOSE OF THE "SAME RACE, SAME RELIGION AND SAME NATIONALITY AS MYSELF".

"I DO NOT FEAR ANYONE OR ANY DANGER, NO MATTER FROM WHERE IT COMES," HE SAID.

"THAT IS WHY WE DO NOT BOW TO ANYONE. IF THE BRITISH WANT TO BE HARD, WE TOO CAN BE HARD. BUT IF THEY WANT TO BE FLEXIBLE, WE TOO WILL BE FLEXIBLE," HE ADDED TO THE THUNDEROUS APPROVAL OF THE DELEGATES.

"THE SPIRIT OF NEVER SAY DIE AND THE SPIRIT TO CONQUER MOUNTAINS ARE THE QUALITIES WE MUST HAVE. THIS IS OUR STRUGGLE NOW."

HE SAID THAT INTRODUCTION OF VARIOUS CONCEPTS BY THE GOVERNMENT WAS TO DEVELOP THE MALAYS AS A PROGRESSIVE AND RESPECTED PEOPLE.

THE MOVE WAS NOT TO SEEK POPULARITY BUT TO MOBILIZE THE MALAYS INTO TAKING THE FIRST STEP, HE SAID.

--BERNAMA 2144/PA