

MAHATHIR-UMNO  
BM

84  
ALOR SETAR, APRIL 19 (BERNAMA) -- (P) DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD WANTS THE EXISTING UMNO TOP LEADERSHIP TO BE RETAINED AND CHANGES MADE ONLY IF ALTERNATIVE CHOICES, OFFERING THEMSELVES FOR PARTY POSTS NEXT MONTH CAN SERVE BETTER THE RACE, RELIGION AND COUNTRY. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID TODAY CONTESTS FOR POSTS WERE UNNECESSARY IF MERELY FOR THE SAKE OF A CHANGE AND IF THERE WAS LITTLE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE CHALLENGERS AND THE INCUMBENTS.

\* I AM NOT PREVENTING ANYONE FROM GOING FOR A POST IN THE PARTY BUT I FEEL THAT IF THERE IS NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TWO CANDIDATES; BUYING FOR A POST, THERE, NEED NOT BE A CONTEST+.

HE MADE THE REMARKS WHEN OPENING THE KUBANG PASU UMNO DIVISION DELEGATES' MEETING AT THE SULTAN ABDUL HALIM SECONDARY SCHOOL NE. R. HERE..

THE UMNO PRESIDENT REITERATED THAT CONTESTS WERE UNNECESSARY IF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE RIVAL CANDIDATES WERE NOT TOO MARKED -- BECAUSE PARTY ELECTIONS WERE NOT A STAGE FOR TWO COMBATANTS BUT A VEHICLE FOR FURTHERING THE INTERESTS OF THE RACE, RELIGION AND COUNTRY.

--MORE 1518/AN  
MAHATHIR-UMNO 2. ALOR SETAR

+ HOWEVER, IF A LEADER HAS BECOME WORTHLESS AND NEEDS TO BE REPLACED, THEN HE SHOULD BE CHALLENGED FOR THE POST AND REMOVED THROUGH DEMOCRATIC MEANS,+ HE ADDED.

HE FELT THE REASONS FOR ELECTION OF NEW LEADERS WERE JUSTIFIABLE ONLY IN CASES WHERE RADICAL CHANGES WERE WANTED, EXISTING LEADERS WERE TOO OLD, USELESS OR CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES DETRIMENTAL TO PARTY INTERESTS AND WHERE THE NEW LEADERS COULD STRENGTHEN THE PARTY AT BOTH THE BRANCH AND DIVISIONAL LEVELS.

+ HOWEVER, IF CHANGES ARE TO ENTAIL ONLY A CHANGE OF PERSONALITIES AND THE NEWCOMER HAS NOTHING TO OFFER BY WAY OF NEW IDEAS, THEN THERE SHOULD NOT BE A NEED TO HAVE A CONTEST.+

IN HIS SPEECH WHICH LASTED OVER AN HOUR, THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO REFERRED TO UNHEALTHY TRENDS EMERGING IN UMNO:

- + BUYING OF VOTES AT ALL LEVELS,
  - + DISSEMINATION OF SLANDER AND CALUMNY AND DISTRIBUTION OF DEFAMATORY PAMPHLETS IN POWER BIDS,
  - + PROHIBITION OF 'OUTSIDERS' FROM OPENING MEETINGS IN PARTICULAR AREAS, AND
  - + SIGNS OF SPLIT IN PARTY UNITY DUE TO ACTIVITIES OF LEADERS - MORE CONTESTING FOR PERSONAL GAIN.
- BERNAMA 1546/PA

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR REGRETTED THAT PARTY ELECTION FEVER HAD SO GRIPPED THE MIND OF LEADERS THAT THE OBJECTIVES AND ORIGINAL STRUGGLE OF THE PARTY HAD BEEN FORGOTTEN.

+I WISH TO REMIND MEMBERS AT THIS JUNCTURE THAT ALTHOUGH CONTESTING FOR POSTS FOR SELF-INTEREST MAY BRING VICTORY, IT WILL ALSO DESTROY THE PARTY.

HE EXPLAINED THAT UNDER THE SYSTEM OF DEMOCRACY PRACTISED BY THE PARTY ANYONE COULD CONTEST FOR A POST IF NOMINATED BUT CANDIDATES SHOULD ASK THEMSELVES IF THEIR CANDIDACY WAS REALLY NECESSARY.

ANYONE WAS ELIGIBLE TO BE NOMINATED BUT THIS DID NOT MEAN HE MUST STAND FOR ELECTION. +WE MUST NOT DO ANYTHING WHICH IS NOT REASONABLE ALTHOUGH THERE IS NOTHING IN THE LAW OR THE CONSTITUTION TO PREVENT US FROM CONTESTING.+

HE STRESSED THE NEED FOR UMNO MEMBERS TO REALIZE THAT THERE WAS ONLY A CERTAIN NUMBER OF POSTS FOR ONLY A CERTAIN NUMBER OF LEADERS IN THE PARTY AND THAT THE REST MUST THEREFORE BE ONLY THE SUPPORTERS.

+WE HAVE DETERMINED FROM THE START THAT ONLY ONE PERSON CAN LEAD THE PARTY SO THAT HE CAN HAVE THE FULL SUPPORT OF MEMBERS FROM THE BRANCHES AND DIVISIONS,+ HE SAID.

HE REGRETTED THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LEADERS OF THE PAST AND THE LEADERS OF THE PRESENT.

LEADERS OF THE PAST, HE SAID, USUALLY NEEDED TO BE PERSUADED INTO ASSUMING LEADERSHIP, UNLIKE THOSE OF NOW WHOSE AGGRESSIVENESS IN GOING FOR POSITIONS HAD CAUSED PROBLEM TO THE PARTY.

+WE ALL WANT TO BE CANDIDATES WITHOUT FIRST FINDING OUT WHETHER WE ARE FIT TO BE LEADERS AND, IN FACT, ALL OF US THINK WE QUALIFY AS SUCH.+

HE SAID THE DESIRE TO WIN HAD LED MANY TO EXCEED THE BOUNDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT BY RESORTING TO QUESTIONABLE TACTICS AND AROUSING ANIMOSITY AMONG ONE ANOTHER.

DATUK DR. MAHATHIR WAS WORRIED THE SITUATION WOULD LEAD TO PERMANENT DISUNITY AFTER THE PARTY ELECTIONS. -- MORE 1638/SL

MAHATHIR - UMNO 5 ALOR SETAR

IF THIS HAPPENED, UMNO MEMBERS WOULD NEVER AGAIN BE UNITED AND THE MALAYS WOULD BE DIVIDED INTO TWO OPPOSING CAMPS.

HE SAID THIS WAS THE PROBLEM FACED BY UMNO. HE BELIEVED IT WAS CAUSED BY EXPECTATIONS OF GETTING PRIVILEGED POSITIONS AND OTHER BENEFITS FOLLOWING PARTY ELECTION SUCCESSES.

SUCH EXPECTATIONS HAD LED TO THE USE OF MONEY TO BUY VOTES AND INFLUENCE, HE SAID.

+ MONEY HAS BEEN USED TO WIN SUPPORT, AND NOT ONLY AT THE LEVEL OF ONLY PAYING FOR MEETINGS AND TRIPS AND BUYING OF SOUVENIRS BUT ALSO BUYING OF CARS, + HE ADDED.

HE DREW A CONTRAST BETWEEN THE SITUATION NOW AND THAT IN THE PAST, SAYING THAT PEOPLE THEN WERE USUALLY RELUCTANT TO BE PARTY OR ELECTION CANDIDATES BECAUSE PARTY LEADERS BEFORE MERDEKA DID NOT BECOME PRIME MINISTERS. -- MORE 1717/SL

ZCZC NO88

MAHATHIR - UMNO 6 ALOR SETAR

TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN HAD TO BE PERSUADED BY TUN RAZAK TO LEAD UMNO AND AFTER DATUK ONN JAAFAR LEFT THE PARTY, HE ACCEPTED THE OFFER AND -- BECAME THE LEADER WITHOUT ANY FUSS OR PROBLEM.

-- PEOPLE NOW DO NOT NEED TO BE PERSUADED TO CONTEST, + HE SAID TO THE LAUGHTER OF THE DELEGATES.

HE REITERATED HIS CALL FOR MAINTENANCE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES OF THE PARTY WHICH WOULD BE WED TO REINFORCE THE POSITION OF THE PARTY, THE MALAYS AND THE COUNTRY.

+ I REVERE DEMOCRACY MORE THAN ANY OTHER MAN FOR WITHOUT DEMOCRACY, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE THAT I, THE SON OF GORENG PISANG SELLER IN RABU TOWN, CAN BECOME THE PRESIDENT OF UMNO AND THE PRIME MINISTER BECAUSE OF MY HUMBLE BIRTH, + HE SAID. -- MORE 1721/SL

ZCZC NO89

MAHATHIR - UMNO 7 ALOR SETAR

HE SAID UMNO MEMBERS COULD ALSO CHOOSE TO HAVE A DICTATORIAL LEADERSHIP IN WHICH THE LEADERS MADE ALL THE DECISIONS AND THE OTHERS OBEYED THEM OR A FEUDAL SYSTEM WHERE LEADERSHIP WAS CONFINED TO ONE FAMILY, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER SUCH A SYSTEM PROVIDED FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP.

HE ADVISED THEM TO THINK ABOUT THIS WHEN CONTESTING IN THE PARTY ELECTIONS AND TO REMEMBER THE FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE OF HAVING ELECTIONS. -- BERNAMA 1723/SL