

KUALA LUMPUR, MAY 22 (BERNAMA) --UMNO PRESIDENT DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD STRESSED TODAY THAT HE IS NOT SUPPORTING OR SIDING ANYONE IN THE CONTESTS FOR PARTY POSTS THIS FRIDAY.

"I HAVE ALWAYS MADE IT CLEAR. HAD THE VICTOR IN THE 1981 UMNO ELECTIONS BEEN DIFFERENT I WOULD HAVE SAID THE SAME THING," HE TOLD BERNAMA IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW AT HIS OFFICE.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THIS IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION WHETHER HIS RECENT STATEMENT URGING UMNO DELEGATES TO MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO, UNLESS THOSE CONTESTING COULD PROVIDE A BETTER ALTERNATIVE AND MORE EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP, HAD IMPLIED THAT HE WAS SIDING ANY CANDIDATE IN PARTICULAR.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR STRESSED THAT HE DID NOT WANT BE SPECIFIC WHEN MAKING THE STATEMENT THEN AS IT WAS MEANT FOR THE PEOPLE TO MAKE THEIR OWN INTERPRETATIONS.

HE RESERVED COMMENT ON THE THREE-CORNERED FIGHT FOR THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT'S POST BETWEEN THE INCUMBENT DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DATUK MUSA HITAM, FINANCE MINISTER TENGKU RAZALEIGH HAMZAH AND UMNO VPCE PRESIDENT DATUK HAJI HARUN IDRIS. -- MORE 1102/WS
MAHATHIR - UMNO 2 KUALA LUMPUR

"I HAVE MADE MY FEELINGS VERY CLEAR ON VERY MANY OCCASIONS. I DON'T SEE THE NECESSITY FOR REPEATING IT."

HE WAS ALSO ASKED IF HIS STATEMENT AT THE LAST UMNO ASSEMBLY THAT HE GOT ALONG VERY WELL WITH DATUK HUSA MEANT THAT IN THE EVENT, OF SOMEONE ELSE BEING ELECTED DEPUTY PRESIDENT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO WORK WITH THE OTHER PERSON.

TO THIS, HE QUOTED FORMER PRIME MINISTER TUANKU ABDUL RAHMAN. "IT'S BETTER TO WORK WITH THE DEVIL YOU KNOW THAN THE ANGEL THAT YOU DON'T KNOW."

ASKED IF HE AGREED WITH THE VIEWS OF MANY UMNO MEMBERS THAT TENGKU RAZALEIGH SHOULD GO FOR THE VICE-PRESIDENCY WHICH WOULD ALSO ENABLE HIM TO CONTINUE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PARTY, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID: "I SUPPOSE THAT IS ONE WAY OUT."

"WELL, SINCE HE IS NOT CONTESTING FOR VICE-PRESIDENT, THAT IS NOT A SOLUTION ANYMORE."

"WE COULD FIND ROOM FOR TWO PEOPLE BUT NOT IN THE SAME SEAT," HE ADDED. -- MORE 1150/WS

MAHATHIR - UMNO 3 KUALA LUMPUR

ON UMNO VICE-PRESIDENT DATUK HARUN IDRIS' STATEMENT THAT HE WAS CONTESTING THE DEPUTY PRESIDENCY TO MEND THE RIFT AMONG UMNO MEMBERS WHO WERE NOW SPLIT BECAUSE OF THE MUSA-RAZALEIGH CONTEST IN 1981, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT, TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, THERE WAS SOME TRUTH IN THE ARGUMENT.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT UMNO MEMBERS MUST ALSO NOT FORGET THAT DATUK HARUN WAS CONTESTING NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THIS ISSUE BUT ALSO DUE TO HIS DISSATISFACTION WITH THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP.

HE DID NOT AGREE WITH DATUK HARUN'S PROPOSAL THAT THE PARTY'S DEPUTY PRESIDENT SHOULD NOT BE THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TO CREATE A SEPARATION OF POWER BETWEEN THE PARTY AND THE GOVERNMENT.

"IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE GOVERNMENT BE EFFECTIVE AND TO BE EFFECTIVE YOU CANNOT SEPARATE THE MAJOR PARTY FROM THE POWER OF THE GOVERNMENT."

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ALSO VOICED CONCERN OVER "UNHEALTHY TRENDS" IN CAMPAIGNS WHICH INCLUDED THE DISTRIBUTION OF CALLING CARDS, BOOKS, AND PAMPHLETS.

HE REGRETTED THAT PRESSURES AND "ARM-TWISTING TACTICS" WERE BEING EMPLOYED. -- MORE 1209/WS

ZCZC NO39 (F/S)

MAHATHIR-UMNO 4 KUALA LUMPUR

"THE CAMPAIGNING NOW IS RIDICULOUS, IF IT HAS COME TO THE POINT WHERE EVEN GOD HAS BEEN INVOKED IN ORDER TO WIN. I THINK THAT IS WRONG. THAT IS IMPROPER."

"IF THIS TREND IS NOT ARRESTED IN THE FUTURE, THE BITTERNESS OF THE FIGHT WILL CERTAINLY DESTROY THE PARTY," HE STRESSED.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR BELIEVED THAT UMNO LEADERS NEED NOT "ADVERTISE" THEMSELVES AS THEIR PERFORMANCE ALONE SPOKE FOR THEM.

"I THINK, BASICALLY, IF YOU SERVED THE COUNTRY WELL, YOU SERVED UMNO WELL, YOU WILL BE RECOGNIZED. IN FACT, IF YOU DO SOMETHING GOOD, I DOUBT WHETHER ANYBODY CAN STOP A REALLY GOOD MAN," HE REPLIED IN RESPONSE TO CLAIMS THAT SOME LEADERS WERE NOT GIVEN FAIR COVERAGE BY THE PRESS.

WITH THREE DAYS MORE TO THE PARTY ELECTIONS, HE ADVISED UMNO DELEGATES TO THINK OF UMNO, THE FUTURE OF THE MALAYS AND THE COUNTRY WHEN CASTING THEIR VOTES. -- MORE 1215/WS

ZCZC NO40 (F/S)

MAHATHIR-UMNO 5 KUALA LUMPUR

"ALL I AM SAYING IS THAT THEY HAVE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS AT STAKE. NOT INDIVIDUALS BUT UMNO. THEY HAVE TO THINK WHAT IS BEST FOR UMNO."

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR REITERATED HIS OFT-REPEATED REMARKS THAT "THE WINNER DOES NOT TAKE ALL AND THE LOSER DOES NOT FALL."

"YOU DON'T EXPECT THAT IF YOU WIN, YOU CAN KICK OUT ANYBODY. NOR DO YOU EXPECT THAT IF YOU LOSE, YOU LOSE EVERYTHING. I WANT EVERYONE TO ACCEPT THE DECISIONS AND CLOSE RANKS."

"THAT IS WHAT UMNO WANTS, SO LET IT BE."

--- BERNAMA 1220/WS