

MAHATHIR-NATIONALIST

PETALING JAYA, AUG. 25 (BERNAMA)-- PAS IS A NATIONALIST PARTY AND HAS NEVER BEEN AN ISLAMIC ONE, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IT WAS WRONG OF PAS LEADERS TO MAKE CLAIMS THAT THEIR PARTY WAS AN ISLAMIC ONE.

*PAS HAS ALWAYS BEEN A NATIONALIST PARTY AND NOT AN ISLAMIC PARTY,+ HE TOLD REPORTERS AFTER OPENING THE SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF KOOP BERSATU -- AN UMNO COOPERATIVE SOCIETY -- AT THE SUBANG VIEW HOTEL HERE,

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR'S COMMENTS CAME IN THE WAKE OF A RECENT STATEMENT BY PAS LEADERS THAT THEY COULD NEVER COME TO AN AGREEMENT WITH UMNO AS UMNO WAS A NATIONALIST PARTY WHILE PAS' STRUGGLE WAS BASED ON ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES.

HE ARGUED THAT, IF PAS WAS TRULY AN ISLAMIC PARTY, IT SHOULD BE OPERATING IN AFGHANISTAN, LEBANON, SOUTH-ERN RUSSIA AND OTHER PLACES WHERE THE MUSLIMS WERE OPPRESSED,

+BUT PAS ONLY OPERATES IN MALAYSIA AND ITS MEMBERSHIP IS CONFINED TO ONLY ONE SINGLE COMMUNITY.

+ IN FACT, THE PARTY IS CONFUSING THE PEOPLE SO MUCH SO THE PUBLIC THINKS THAT YOU MUST BE A MEMBER OF THE PARTY (PAS) BEFORE BECOMING A MUSLIM.+-MORE

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DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID HE WAS LOOKING INTO RECENT CALLS BY SEVERAL UMNO LEADERS THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BAN POLITICAL PARTIES FROM USING THE WORD +ISLAM+ IN NAMING THEIR PARTY.

HE SAID HE HAD RECEIVED A MEMORANDUM FROM MELAKA CHIEF MINISTER DATUK SERI ABDUL RAHIM THAMBY CHIK WHO CONTENDED THAT THE USE OF THE WORD +ISLAM+ IN THE NAMES OF POLITICAL PARTIES COULD DIVIDE THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY AND CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE LEADERS OF THE PARTIES TO MAKE USE OF THE NAME FOR THEIR OWN INTERESTS.

+I HAVE TO STUDY THE FULL IMPLICATION OF THE MATTER. IN FACT, I NEED TIME TO STUDY IT AS IT IS A SERIOUS MATTER.

+I CAN'T SAY IT IS A GOOD OR BAD PROPOSAL. I DON'T MAKE A DECISION AFTER A TEA PARTY,+ HE ADDED WHEN PRESSED WHETHER HE WOULD CONSIDER SUCH A BAN. ---BERNAMA