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MAHATHIR - ISA
FROM RACHMAN NORDIN

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PHILADELPHIA, OCT. 10 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TOLD MALAYSIAN STUDENTS HERE HE WILL NOT APOLOGISE FOR USING THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT (ISA) AGAINST ELEMENTS WHO HAVE NO RESPECT AT ALL FOR MALAYSIA'S LAWS.

HOWEVER, HE ASSURED THAT THE ISA WOULD BE USED ONLY AS A LAST RESORT AGAINST ELEMENTS WHO TRIED TO CAPITALISE ON THE NORMAL TRIAL PROCESS AND TO TURN THEMSELVES INTO MARTYRS.

REPLYING TO QUESTIONS RAISED DURING THE MEETING YESTERDAY, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT THE ISA WOULD BE ONLY ENFORCED WHEN ANTI-NATIONAL ELEMENTS HAD GONE TO THE EXTREME IN TRYING TO CREATE DISUNITY AMONG THE PEOPLE.

HE SAID THE ISA WOULD BE USED WHEN UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES ORDINARY LAWS WERE NO LONGER EFFECTIVE AS THE ANTI-NATIONAL ELEMENTS SHOWED TOTAL DISREGARD FOR THE LAW.

REGARDING THE RECENT ARRESTS OF PAS MEMBERS UNDER THE ISA, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THEY HAD NO RESPECT AT ALL FOR THE LAW.

THE DETAINEES HAVE SINCE BEEN RELEASED.

ON THE PROPOSED PAS-UMNO DEBATE, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID A TELECAST OF THE DEBATE WOULD ENABLE THE PUBLIC TO JUDGE WHETHER PAS LEADERS WERE JUSTIFIED IN ACCUSING UMNO LEADERS OF BEING INFIDELS.

THE TELECAST WOULD ALSO BE VITAL IN ALLOWING THE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THOSE MISLED BY PAS TO BELIEVE THAT ONLY THEIR MEMBERS WERE ISLAMIC, TO LISTEN TO UMNO'S REBUTTAL, HE SAID.

+WE WANT TO KNOW FROM PAS THE POSITION OF PROPHET MOHAMAD WHO WAS NOT A PAS MEMBER -- WHETHER HE WAS ISLAMIC OR NOT. WHAT ABOUT MUSLIMS IN OTHER COUNTRIES WHO ARE NOT PAS MEMBERS? ARE THEY INFIDELS TOO?+ HE ASKED.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR WAS ASKED THE RATIONALE FOR THE PROPOSED TELECAST OF THE DEBATE FOR WHICH ONE STUDENT SUGGESTED A ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE COULD BE A BETTER ALTERNATIVE. -- BERNAMA

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