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MAHATHIR - ISLAM '84 P

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KEMAMAN, NOV 8 (BERNAMA) -- UMNO IS PREPARED TO LEAVE IT TO RESPONSIBLE BODIES TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE PARTY IS +KAFIR+ BUT WILL NOT ALLOW PAS TO MAKE SUCH A JUDGEMENT ARBITRARILY* PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

HE SAID PAS' ACCUSATION THAT UMNO MEMBERS WERE +KAFIR+ WAS A SERIOUS CHARGE AND UMNO HAD TO TAKE STEPS TO DEFEND ITSELF.

HE SAID THE PROPOSED DEBATE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO DETERMINE WHETHER UMNO MEMBERS WERE +KAFIR,+ BUT WOULD ENABLE THE PEOPLE TO SEE FOR THEMSELVES PAS' DISTORTION.

OPENING A WANITA UMNO WORK CAMP HERE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE +KAFIR+ ISSUE HAD REACHED A LEVEL WHERE UMNO COULD NO LONGER REMAIN QUIET.

+ UMNO MUST DEFEND ITS STAND AND MUST STATE THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH IS THAT UMNO MEMBERS ARE MUSLIMS,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID HE WAS AWARE THAT SOME QUARTERS HAD CALLED FOR THE CANCELLATION OF THE DEBATE AS THEY FELT IT WOULD NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM WHILE OTHERS CONSIDERED THE TOPIC OF THE DEBATE TO BE +HARAM.+

HE SAID HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE TOPIC HAD BECOME THE TARGET OF OBJECTIONS. +WHAT SHOULD BE A MATTER OF CONCERN IS NOT THE DEBATE BUT PAS' ACCUSATION THAT UMNO IS KAFIR,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ADMITTED THAT THE DEBATE WOULD NOT PROVE WHETHER UMNO MEMBERS WERE +KAFIR,+ BUT SAID IT WOULD ALLOW THE PEOPLE TO GAUGE FOR THEMSELVES HOW PAS HAD DISTORTED THE ISSUES INVOLVED.

HE SAID PAS HAD DENIED IT MADE ALL THE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST UMNO EVEN THOUGH THE LATTER POSSESSED PROOF AND TAPE RECORDINGS OF ITS LEADERS' SPEECHES.

HE SAID MATTERS HAD NOW COME TO A HEAD, WITH PAS MEMBERS REFUSING TO EAT MEAT SLAUGHTERED BY UMNO PEOPLE, CALLING FOR SEPARATE CEMETERIES, CONDUCTING PRAYERS WITH THEIR OWN IMAMS AND HAVING MARRIAGES ORIGINALLY CONDUCTED BY UMNO PEOPLE SOLEMNIZED AGAIN.

PAS WAS ALSO CONDUCTING PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGNS IN KAMPUNGS, LEADING TO A SPLIT AMONG MUSLIMS AND CREATING TENSION AND ANXIETY AMONG THE PEOPLE.

HE SAID UMNO COULD TAKE STEPS TO HAVE DISCUSSIONS OR WRITE TO THE PAPERS, BUT PAS WOULD DEFINITELY DENY THAT IT HAD MADE DISTORTED STATEMENTS.

+UMNO'S CAUSE NOW IS NOT ONLY TO SAVE ITS MEMBERS BUT ALSO TO SAVE PAS MEMBERS FROM THEIR OWN LEADERS,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR DESCRIBED PAS' ACCUSATION AS HAVING GONE BEYOND THE LIMITS AND SAID IT STARTED SEVERAL YEARS BACK WITHOUT ANY ACTION BEING TAKEN.

HE SAID WHAT WAS IMPORTANT WAS NOT WHETHER UMNO ADHERED TO ISLAMIC TEACHINGS BUT WHETHER PAS WOULD RID ITSELF OF ITS BAD HABIT.

+ SHOULD THEY BE WILLING TO DISCARD THIS BAD HABIT OF THEIRS, THEN UMNO MIGHT CONSIDER ACCEPTING PAS, AND NOT THE OTHER WAY ROUND,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT IF PAS HAD HELD FIRMLY TO ISLAMIC TEACHINGS, THERE WOULD NOT BE ANY SPLIT AMONG THE MUSLIMS AND NEITHER WOULD THE MUSLIMS BE BOYCOTTING OR REVILING ONE ANOTHER.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IT WAS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT ANYONE BRANDING ANOTHER PERSON +KAFIR+ WOULD HIMSELF BE CONSIDERED +KAFIR+ IF HIS ACCUSATION PROVED TO BE FALSE.

IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT UMNO WAS ALSO TRYING TO SAVE PAS MEMBERS, HE ADDED.

UMNO'S ASPIRATION WAS TO CREATE A SOCIETY IMBUED WITH ISLAMIC VALUES. AS SUCH ITS MEMBERS MUST RENEW THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE? HE ADDED.

HE SAID THE PROCESS OF MARKING A PERSON AS +KAFIR+ WAS LONG AND COMPLICATED AND INVOLVED PEOPLE OF HIGH KNOWLEDGE AND POSITION IN SOCIETY. + ONLY THIS SELECT GROUP CAN DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT A PERSON IS KAFIR.+

HE ALSO SAID ONLY CERTAIN BODIES COULD HAND DOWN FATWA (RELIGIOUS RULINGS)..

+THIS QUESTION OF KAFIR-MENKAFIR IS A BIG THING AND UMNO CAN NO LONGER REMAIN SILENT.+ -- MORE
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MAHATHIR - ISLAM KEMAMAN

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IT WAS CHARACTERISTIC OF PAS TO RESORT TO SUCH ACCUSATIONS, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COULD NOT GET WHAT IT WANTED.

+ THIS CAN BE PROVEN IF THE MALAYS REVIEW UMNO'S PAST STRUGGLES, PARTICULARLY WHEN PAS SUFFERED SERIOUS SETBACKS DURING THE ELECTIONS AND WHEN PAS WAS STILL IN UMNO,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR DESCRIBED -PAS' TACTICS AS THOSE OF A POWER-GREEDY GROUP.

HE SAID THE PRESENT PAS LEADERS ALSO BLAMED THEIR PREDECESSORS WHENEVER THEIR TACTICS FAILED TO MAKE ANY IMPRESSION ON UMNO.

HE ALSO SAID UNITY AMONG THE MALAYS WOULD BENEFIT THE MUSLIMS AND OTHER GROUPS BECAUSE +THERE IS NO PROHIBITION AGAINST ANY ISLAMIC ADMINISTRATION WORKING FOR THE GOOD OF ITS NON-MUSLIM CITIZENS.+

ON THE THREE-DAY WORK CAMP ATTENDED BY MORE THAN 400 WANITA UMNO MEMBERS, HE SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR PREPARING THEMSELVES AGAINST AN ENEMY WHICH HAD NO HONOUR. -- BERNAMA
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