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MAHATHIR-SABAH

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KUALA LUMPUR, APRIL 29 (BERNAMA) -- /DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY HE ENDORSED DATUK MUSA HITAM'S HANDLING OF THE EVENTS FOLLOWING THE APRIL 20-21 STATE ELECTION IN SABAH IN WHICH THE RULING BERJAYA PARTY WAS TOPPLED FROM POWER BY THE PARTI BERSATU SABAH (PBS).

+HE HAS MY FULL SUPPORT,+ THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD REPORTERS WHEN ASKED HIS VIEWS ON DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DATUK MUSA'S REJECTION OF A REQUEST BY BERJAYA PRESIDENT DATUK HARRIS SALLEH TO FORM THE NEW SABAH STATE GOVERNMENT IN COALITION WITH USNO FOLLOWING THE BERJAYA DEFEAT.

+HE IS THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER (AT THAT TIME). HE HAS BEEN GIVEN THE FULL AUTHORITY TO MAKE DECISIONS. HE HAD MADE A DECISION AND I STAND SQUARELY BEHIND HIM,+ HE TOLD REPORTERS ON ARRIVAL HOME FROM A 20-DAY TOUR OF THE SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES AND AUSTRIA.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WHO IS BARISAN NASIONAL CHAIRMAN WAS COMMENTING ON DATUK MUSA'S STATEMENT IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ELECTION THAT THE BN WOULD CONTINUE TO RESPECT THE WISHES OF THE MAJORITY BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY.

DATUK MUSA HAD ISSUED THE STATEMENT IN THE WAKE OF THE ABORTIVE COUP BY BERJAYA AND USNO TO USURP THE POWER OF GOVERNMENT FROM THE VICTORIOUS PBS IN THE STATE ELECTION. --MORE  
2112MST 29 04 85

MAHATHIR-SABAH 2 KUALA LUMPUR

ON THE BERJAYA-USNO ATTEMPT TO WREST POWER, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HE WOULD HAVE TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER IN DETAIL BEFORE TAKING ANY ACTION.

+WE WILL HAVE TO KNOW WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED.+

FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT, THE NEW SABAH CHIEF MINISTER, DATUK JOSEPH PAIRIN KITINGAN, CALLED ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO SACK BERJAYA FROM THE BARISAN NASIONAL.

TO THIS, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR REPLIED:+I DO NOT KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE EXPULSION (CALL). PBS IS NOT EVEN A MEMBER OF THE BN. WE WILL LIKE TO HEAR FROM THE PBS ON WHY BERJAYA HAS TO BE REMOVED FROM THE BN.+

BUT THE PRIME MINISTER MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE QUESTION OF BERJAYA'S EXPULSION FROM THE 11-MEMBER BN COALITION DOES NOT ARISE AT THE MOMENT.

OF THE 48 SEATS UP FOR GRABS IN THE STATE ELECTION, PBS SECURED 25, USNO 16, BERJAYA SIX AND PASOK ONE. IT LATER GAINED FOUR MORE SEATS WHEN THE VICTORIOUS PASOK CANDIDATE JOINED PBS AS PLEDGED AND THREE BERJAYA ASSEMBLYMEN DEFECTED TO IT. --MORE  
2119MST 29 04 85

MAHATHIR-SABAH 3 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO HAS A MESSAGE FOR THE PBS: +BE A GOOD GOVERNMENT.+

HE STRESSED THAT FOR THE PRESENT, HIS STATEMENT AT A RALLY IN KOTA KINABALU DURING THE SABAH STATE ELECTION THAT +THE BN WILL SINK OR SWIM WITH BERJAYA+ STILL STANDS.

+WELL, AT THE MOMENT, IT OBVIOUSLY STILL HOLDS. I DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE FUTURE WILL BE,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO REITERATED THAT THE BARISAN NASIONAL WOULD DECIDE ON PBS' APPLICATION TO JOIN THE BN AT A MEETING OF THE BN SUPREME COUNCIL ON A DATE YET TO BE DECIDED.

HE EXPRESSED HIS WILLINGNESS TO MEET DATUK PAIRIN WHO HAD REQUESTED TO SEE HIM. DATUK HARRIS WILL MEET DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR TOMORROW TO PRESENT A FULL REPORT ON BERJAYA'S DISMAL PERFORMANCE IN THE ELECTION. --MORE

2123MST 29 04 85

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MAHATHIR-SABAH 4 KUALA LUMPUR

ASKED WHETHER HE WAS PERSONALLY IN FAVOUR OF PBS JOINING THE BN, THE PRIME MINISTER REPLIED:+ I DO NOT MAKE PERSONAL COMMENTS. I WILL NOT TRY TO INFLUENCE ANYONE ON THE MATTER BEFOREHAND.

+I AM GIVING EVERYBODY A FAIR CHANCE TO DECIDE. I HAVE TO CONSULT MY OTHER COLLEAGUES.+

HE EXPRESSED HIS DISAPPOINTMENT WITH BERJAYA'S DEFEAT BUT SAID A PROPER ANALYSIS WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE BEFORE THE BN COULD SINGLE OUT THE REASONS FOR THE DEFEAT.

+WELL, OF COURSE I AM DISAPPOINTED,+ HE SAID. +I TORE MY HAIR,+ HE JOKED WHEN ASKED ON HIS FIRST REACTION TO BERJAYA'S DOWNFALL.

ASKED ON THE BERJAYA-USNO ATTEMPT, HE SAID HE WOULD HAVE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED BEFORE MAKING ANY COMMENT.

+THE MATTER HAPPENED IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT. ONE HAS TO GIVE DUE CONSIDERATION TO THE ATMOSPHERE AT THAT TIME.+ --BERNAMA

2137MST 29 04 85