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MAHATHIR-MCA

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SUBANG, APRIL 29 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY RETURNED HOME FROM A 20-DAY TOUR OF SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES WITH A STATEMENT THAT HE WOULD TRY TO SORT OUT THE MCA CRISIS WHICH HAD RE-SURFACED DURING HIS ABSENCE.

THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO APPEARED UNHAPPY OVER THE CONTINUED FEUD BETWEEN THE TWO FACTIONS IN THE MCA, STRESSED THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO STUDY THE MATTER IN DETAIL BEFORE THINKING OF A SOLUTION.

HE DID NOT SAY WHETHER FRESH NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE CARRIED OUT OR A NEW MEDIATOR APPOINTED TO SETTLE THE PROBLEMS BETWEEN ACTING MCA PRESIDENT DATUK DR NEO YEE PAN AND FORMER VICE-PRESIDENT ENCIK TAN KOON SWAN.

+I WANT TO BE GIVEN TIME TO CONSIDER THE MATTER. I DO NOT KNOW WHAT WENT ON AS I HAD BEEN CUT OFF TOTALLY FROM DEVELOPMENTS BACK HOME,+ DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS ALSO BARISAN NASIONAL CHAIRMAN, TOLD REPORTERS ON ARRIVAL AT THE KUALA LUMPUR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT HERE.

APART FROM THE MCA ISSUE, HE WAS IN A JOVIAL MOOD, SAYING +IT'S GREAT TO BE BACK HOME+ TO CABINET MINISTERS AND REPORTERS WAITING TO WELCOME HIM.

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HE TOOK A DIG AT DATUK DR NEO AND MCA SECRETARY-GENERAL TAN SRI CHONG HON NYAN WHEN HE RELATED HOW THE PHANTOM MEMBERS ISSUE (WHICH SPARKED OFF THE MCA CRISIS) WAS ALSO HAPPENING TO A POLITICAL PARTY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND BECAME A HEADLINE STORY IN SEVERAL BRITISH NEWSPAPERS.

+YOU KNOW, IT SEEMS THE PHANTOM MEMBERS HAVE SPREAD LIKE CANCER TO POLITICAL PARTIES OVERSEAS TOO,+ HE TOLD DATUK DR NEO TO LAUGHTER BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DATUK MUSA HITAM, WHICH PROMPTED DATUK DR NEO TO TELL HIM (DATUK MUSA):+ DATUK, AS YOU KNOW THE PHANTOM MEMBERS WERE NOT THE REAL ISSUE IN OUR PARTY.+

ABOUT 100 MCA MEMBERS SAID TO BE SUPPORTERS OF THE TAN KOON SWAN FACTION CARRIED BANNERS BEARING THE MESSAGE +WELCOME BACK+ ALONG THE PATH LEADING TO THE VIP ROOM OF THE AIRPORT.

THE MCA PROBLEM FIRST RESOLVED FOLLOWING THE JAN 30 PEACE ACCORD BETWEEN THE TWO RIVAL FACTIONS SIGNED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRIME MINISTER RE-SURFACED ABOUT A MONTH AGO WHEN ENCIK TAN CLAIMED THAT THE VERIFICATION EXERCISE FOR THE MCA MEMBERSHIP LIST +WAS TANTAMOUNT TO DISMISSAL OF PARTY MEMBERS.+ --BERNAMA

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