

Umno members told: Reject money politics

515 JUL 1995

By ROBERT HO

MENTAKAB, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned Umno members today of the twin evils of money politics and arrogance of power.

The Umno president and Prime Minister said that money politics would lead not only to corruption within the party but, given Umno's position as the premier political party, to within the Government itself.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Barisan Nasional chairman, said that arrogance of power, on the other hand, would lead to the party being rejected by the people in an election.

Without naming Berjaya, the Barisan's sole representative in Sabah, he said that arrogance had led to "a Barisan component party" being thrown out of power

in a State election. Berjaya was defeated by the newly-formed Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) in the April State election.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to about 5,000 Barisan members at the opening of the newly-created Mentakab Umno division's first divisional delegates meeting. Also present were Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah and Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Najib Tun Abdul Razak and his wife, Tunku Putri Zainah.

In urging Umno members to reject money politics and "corrupt practices," he said that if this trend was left unchecked, Umno would be destroyed.

"If Umno becomes a corrupt organisation, then the corrupt practices will find their way into the Government," he said.

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He added that a country riddled with corruption would not achieve development but would instead be destroyed.

"There is no need for me to elaborate on the consequences of having a corrupt government because many of you are aware of them," he said.

Dr Mahathir stressed that the people should not rationalise money politics by saying "we can take money and then don't vote for him. After all, if we don't accept, others will."

The Prime Minister warned that this kind of reasoning indicated that those who accepted money actually wanted to do so all

along and that they actually condoned money politics.

"This means we are allowing corruption. We should not accept anything from people who use this way of getting positions."

Dr Mahathir pointed out that someone who was dedicated and capable could win electoral contests without resorting to such practices.

"Putting an end to corrupt practices will help the party remain stable and its leadership to be more meaningful. The Government, too, will then be a good government.

"But if we allow money politics and corruption to continue, the Government, too, will be affected as it will not be free from such evil practices," he warned.

Dr Mahathir reminded members that the party had practised democracy since it was formed and that it was because Umno practised democracy that the country did the same.

He said they should, however, be careful not to allow arrogance of power to creep in having been in power for so long.

Dr Mahathir urged members to get rid of the idea that the party would never lose a general election.

He said Umno members should instead continue to carry out activities that would bring them closer to the people and that such activities should be held all the time and not just when an election draws near.