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MAHATHIR-MCA R R R R 85  
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KUALA LUMPUR, JULY 20 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY REFUTED NEWSPAPER REPORTS THAT HE HAD DIRECTED ACTING MCA PRESIDENT DATUK DR NEO YEE PAN AND LEADER OF THE OTHER MCA FACTION ENCIK TAN KOON SWAN TO STEP DOWN FROM THEIR RESPECTIVE POSTS IN A BID TO SETTLE THE CRISIS IN THE PARTY.

+I NEVER ISSUED SUCH A DIRECTIVE. IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ISSUED BY SOME OTHER QUARTER BUT NOT ME,+ HE TOLD REPORTERS AFTER CHAIRING A FIVE-HOUR MEETING OF THE UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL AT UMNO HEADQUARTERS HERE.

A CHINESE NEWSPAPER REPORTED ABOUT THE ALLEGED DIRECTIVE ON WEDNESDAY AND THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY REPORTS IN OTHER DAILIES THAT DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS ALSO BARISAN NASIONAL CHAIRMAN AND UMNO PRESIDENT, WAS EXPECTED TO MAKE AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE MATTER AFTER TODAY'S MEETING.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT ALMOST TWO-AND-A-HALF HOURS OF TODAY'S MEETING FOCUSSED ON THE MCA CRISIS AND ITS EFFECTS ON BARISAN NASIONAL AS WELL AS UMNO.

HE ADDED THAT THE DISCUSSIONS TOOK SOME TIME AS ALL SUPREME COUNCIL MEMBERS WANTED TO VOICE THEIR VIEWS ON THE CRISIS. -- MORE 2158MST 20 07 85

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MAHATHIR-MCA 2 KUALA LUMPUR

+THE SUPREME COUNCIL MEMBERS HAD DIFFERING OPINIONS AND THE DISCUSSIONS ENABLED US TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON THE ISSUE,+ DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID.

+WITHOUT SUCH EXCHANGE OF VIEWS, I MIGHT CONSIDER ONLY MY VIEW TO BE THE CORRECT ONE IN THE MATTER,+ HE ADDED.

HOWEVER, THE PRIME MINISTER STRESSED THAT THE COUNCIL DID NOT REACH ANY STAND ON THE MCA CRISIS AS THE COUNCIL MEMBERS ONLY DISCUSSED THE EFFECTS ON THE BN AND UMNO OF THE FRICTION BETWEEN THE

DATUK DR NEO AND TAN KWON SWAN FACTIONS AND DID NOT GO INTO PROBLEMS WITHIN THE MCA.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO STRESSED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR UMNO, AS THE MAIN BN COMPONENT PARTY, TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON THE CONSEQUENCES THAT MIGHT ARISE FROM THE PROBLEMS CAUSED BY THE CRISIS.

HE ALSO SAID HIS STATEMENT AND ANY OTHER EXPLANATION WOULD STILL NOT SUCCEED IN ELIMINATING ALL THE RUMOURS ABOUT THE MCA CRISIS. --  
MORE

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MAHATHIR-MCA 3 KUALA LUMPUR

+I CANNOT STOP RUMOURS FROM SPREADING. IT IS UP TO THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES TO IGNORE RUMOURS AS WELL TO STOP THEM FROM SPREADING,+ HE ADDED.

ASKED WHY THE SUPREME COUNCIL DECIDED TO SETTLE ALL MATTERS OUTSTANDING IN TODAY'S MEETING AND NOT WAIT FOR NEXT MONTH'S MEETING, THE PRIME MINISTER EXPLAINED THAT THE MEETING WAS A CONTINUATION OF LAST WEEK'S MEETING.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DATUK MUSA HITAM LEFT THE MEETING EARLY TO ATTEND A FUNCTION SCHEDULED FOR TONIGHT.

ALSO PRESENT AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE WERE UMNO SECRETARY-GENERAL DATUK SERI SANUSI JUNID AND VICE-PRESIDENT ENCIK GHAFAR BABA, WHO IS ALSO CHAIRMAN OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE TO CLEAN UP THE MCA MEMBERSHIP REGISTER. --BERNAMA

2235MST 20 07 85