

DR M: I KNEW OF MUSA'S STATEMENT

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that his deputy, Datuk Musa Hitam, consulted him before suggesting in December that the MCA leave the Barisan Nasional temporarily to resolve its crisis.

"In fact, I discussed the matter with Datuk Musa and we both felt that it would be better if the MCA tried to resolve its problems outside the Barisan.

"The coalition would then not be troubled with having one faction

17 SEP 1983
within it which could obstruct another faction from forming a party and applying to become a member of the Barisan.

"The MCA, as a member of the Barisan, can object to the entry of any new party even if that party has the support of the majority of Chinese in Malaysia," he added.

Dr Mahathir said that if MCA left the coalition, the Yee Pan and Koon Swan factions could then contest the party elections and "whoever

wins can rejoin the Barisan."

Datuk Musa had said in Ipoh on Dec. 16 that there was a growing feeling among Umno leaders that perhaps the MCA should "temporarily opt out of the Barisan milieu" to solve the crisis if it threatened to drag on much longer or was not seen to be resolved through the efforts of Barisan secretary-general Ghafar Baba.

The MCA crisis was then nine months old.