

# Mahathir: Umno had a right to intervene

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I DON'T understand why there are accusations against Umno. Throughout the crisis, the leaders of both factions came to see me in my capacity as Prime Minister and Barisan Nasional chairman.

I did not intervene because I regarded it as an internal matter. But when the crisis continued, it no longer remained an internal matter because it threatened the stability of the Barisan Nasional, the Government and country.

In such a situation, all parties within the Barisan have a right to ensure that the crisis ended in a manner which did not threaten Barisan's position.

Umno, too, had a right to voice its opinion. Furthermore, all other (component) parties had a right to give advice, whether openly or otherwise.

If the accusations against Umno are not stopped, they might threaten the Barisan.

There are certain circles within the MCA who would

**THE Umno newsletter *Merdeka* asked Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on his views on the MCA crisis — how it began and why it has not been resolved after 18 months.**

**In the interview, Dr Mahathir spoke at length on why the crisis erupted, the Barisan Nasional's role in trying to diffuse the crisis, and the developments after the Aug. 17 Barisan Nasional Supreme Council meeting at which the MCA asked for three months to solve its problems, failing which it would leave the Barisan.**

**The following is the full text of Dr Mahathir's statement to the newsletter:**

like the crisis to have adverse effects on the Barisan, maybe because there are some MCA members who do not agree with the Barisan concept.

It is not for me to suggest a solution to the MCA crisis, but as a member of the Barisan Nasional, we surely want a party which represents the Chinese in Malaysia to get the support of the majority, if not all the Chinese.

We don't want only part of the Chinese community to support the party. If that happens, it means that the

Chinese representation in the Government come from those who are not getting the support of the majority of the community.

We want the Chinese to be represented effectively ... not those who represent only one faction.

Encik Ghafar Baba was involved because he is Barisan secretary-general. While the Barisan does not like to interfere in a component party's crisis, I had been asked many times to step in to solve the problem in my capacity as Barisan chairman.

I have explained why Dr Neo's services in the Cabinet were terminated. Now, some are making Umno the scapegoat in getting support from Chinese chauvinists.

They say Umno is to blame when all the time this crisis began and worsened because of a power tussle between two sides.

They each say that because Umno intervened, it meant Umno was trying to decide who should lead the party. In fact, Umno has a right, being a Barisan component party to determine the future of the coalition and MCA's membership.

It is not only Umno which intervened, but other component parties as well, as was said by Gerakan president Datuk Dr Lim Keng Yaik who gave his advice on how to solve the crisis.

Therefore, the accusations against Umno are a ploy which can endanger all parties.

If the MCA crisis is not resolved, then the Barisan will face problems and maybe, the political stability of the country will also be affected.

Despite this, I believe we can overcome this matter and we will not be threatened by any circle just because they feel they are that important to the Barisan.

The stumbling blocks are those who do not care about MCA's fate but place priority on their own positions within the party for selfish interests. They are willing to obstruct all efforts to unite the MCA.

If we want to learn a lesson from this crisis, we must remember that leaders who place personal positions above party interests can destroy their organisations.