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KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT 29 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK MUSA HITAM TODAY MADE AN OPEN PLEDGE AT THE UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY HERE TO CONTINUE TO GIVE HIS UNDIVIDED SUPPORT TO DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR AS UMNO PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER.

DATUK MUSA, WHO IS UMNO DEPUTY PRESIDENT AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, ALSO BROKE A LONG SILENCE TO DISPEL RUMOURS OF A STRAIN IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR.

DATUK MUSA MADE THE PLEDGE WHEN REPLYING TO POINTS RAISED BY THE DELEGATES.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO LATER WOUND UP THE DEBATE ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, SAID: +I DID NOT PRESSURE DATUK MUSA INTO MAKING THE STATEMENT BECAUSE I HAVE NEVER QUESTIONED HIS LOYALTY TO THE PARTY AND AS A PARTNER IN THE ADMINISTRATION.+ -- MORE
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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR THANKED DATUK MUSA FOR HIS CLARIFICATION AND HIS PLEDGE OF SUPPORT.

HE SAID THAT EVEN THOUGH MANY PEOPLE HAD ASKED HIM WHY HE HAD BEEN THE ONE MAKING STATEMENTS ABOUT HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH DATUK MUSA, HIS CONFIDENCE IN DATUK MUSA'S LOYALTY AS A COLLEAGUE IN THE PARTY AND THE GOVERNMENT HAD NEVER WAVERED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR CALLED ON THE DELEGATES AND OBSERVERS TO INFORM THE REST OF THE UMNO MEMBERS OF THE +TRUE SITUATION+ BETWEEN HIM AND DATUK MUSA.

DATUK MUSA ALSO SAID THAT HE AND DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HAD ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD EACH OTHER. +WE HAVE NEVER QUARRELLED.+

HE SAID THAT THEY HAD CARRIED OUT THEIR TASKS ACCORDING TO THE TRADITIONS IN UMNO AND THE GOVERNMENT +ON THE BASIS OF COMPLEMENTARITY.+ -- MORE
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HE SAID HE PERFORMED HIS TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN AREAS ASSIGNED TO HIM BY THE PRIME MINISTER WHILE DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR LOOKED AFTER OTHER, DESIGNATED AREAS.

AS SUCH, HE SAID, IF HE HAD NOT SAID ANYTHING ABOUT THE HEAVY INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, FOR EXAMPLE, IT DID NOT MEAN HE DID NOT SUPPORT THE POLICY REGARDING THE SECTOR.

HE SAID THAT IN ANY EVENT HE HAD BEEN GIVEN THE TASK OF LOOKING INTO LIGHT INDUSTRIES OR RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

BY THE SAME TOKEN, HE SAID, WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER +LOOKED EAST+ AND HE +LOOKED WEST,+ IT SHOULD BE REGARDED AS PART OF THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPLEMENTARITY. -- MORE
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UMNO-MUSA 4 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK MUSA ALSO SAID THAT IN WHATEVER ACTIONS HE TOOK OR STATEMENTS HE MADE REGARDING MAJOR ISSUES HE HAD CONSULTED DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR.

+THERE IS NO QUESTION OF MY QUARRELLING WITH HIM. A LOOK AT THE RECORD OF THE COUNTRY'S ADMINISTRATION WILL SHOW THAT NO DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER HAS EVER BEEN GIVEN SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO BE ACTING PRIME MINISTER AS I HAVE,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT IF IT WAS TRUE THAT DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HAD NO CONFIDENCE IN HIM, THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO HAND OVER THE REINS OF GOVERNMENT TO HIM.

DATUK MUSA ASKED UMNO MEMBERS TO ERASE WHATEVER DOUBTS THEY HAD REGARDING HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR.

+I APOLOGISE TO THOSE WHO HAVE HOPES OF SEEING US QUARREL, BUT WE WILL CONTINUE TO CHAMPION THE CAUSE OF THE RELIGION, RACE AND COUNTRY WITH ONE VOICE.+ -- MORE

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UMNO-MUSA 5 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK MUSA INVITED UMNO MEMBERS, INCLUDING THE SUPREME COUNCIL MEMBERS, TO GIVE THEIR FULL SUPPORT TO THE PARTY PRESIDENT TO ENSURE THE PARTY'S SUCCESS AGAINST ITS POLITICAL OPPONENTS, ESPECIALLY IN THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION.

HE EMPHASISED THAT PARTY UNITY WAS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE NOT ONLY AMONG MEMBERS AT THE BRANCH AND DIVISION LEVELS BUT ALSO AMONG SUPREME COUNCIL MEMBERS.

HE SAID THAT TALK OF A BREAK BETWEEN HIM AND DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WAS NOT ONLY WIDESPREAD AMONG UMNO MEMBERS AND THE PEOPLE BUT HAD EVEN PROMPTED SUPREME COUNCIL MEMBERS TO WONDER IF THERE WAS STILL UNITY IN THE PARTY. -- BERNAMA

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