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KOTA BAHARU, JUNE 29 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY CERTAIN PARTIES OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY WHO WANT TO SEE THE GOVERNMENT TOPPLED ARE TRYING TO STIR UP THE PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY THE MALAYS, OVER THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY (NEP).

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THEY WERE DISTORTING HIS STATEMENTS IN THE FOREIGN MEDIA AND ALLEGING THAT HE HAD DIRECTED THE NEP TO BE IGNORED IN THE ATTAINMENT OF ECONOMIC GROWTH.

HE SAID THEY RESORTED TO THIS IN THE HOPE THAT THE MALAYS WOULD NOT SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT.

OPENING THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MALAYSIAN BUMIPUTERA BUILDING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION, HE SAID: +THEY WISH TO SEE THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT DESTROYED BECAUSE OF OUR FIRM STAND ON CERTAIN ISSUES.

+ACTUALLY, THEY HOPE FOR A WEAK GOVERNMENT SO THAT IT WILL BE EASY FOR THEM TO MANIPULATE US.+ -- MORE  
1539MST 29 06 86

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MAHATHIR-NEP 2 KOTA BAHARU

HE SAID THESE PEOPLE CLAIMED THAT THE NEP ONLY BENEFITED CERTAIN GROUPS OF BUMIPUTERAS, INCLUDING CONTRACTORS WHO WERE THE +GOVERNMENT'S FAVOURITES+.

+I AM RAISING THIS MATTER BECAUSE IT HAS NOW REACHED THE STAGE WHERE THE MALAYS THEMSELVES HAVE STARTED CRITICISING THE NEP TO THE POINT WHERE IT HAS CREATED PROBLEMS FOR THE GOVERNMENT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THE NEP WAS NOW MEETING OPPOSITION FROM THE BUMIPUTERAS THEMSELVES, PARTICULARLY STUDENTS WHO HAD BENEFITED FROM FURTHER EDUCATION UNDER THE POLICY.

THEY FAILED TO SEE THE BENEFITS OF THE POLICY FROM THE ASPECT OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND HAD INSTEAD CLAIMED THAT THE POLICY WAS BENEFITING SOME BUMIPUTERAS ONLY, HE ADDED.

HE REGRETTED THE ATTITUDE OF SOME MALAYS WHO, WITHOUT INVESTIGATING THE ALLEGATIONS AND CRITICISMS AGAINST THE NEP, HAD BEEN SWAYED INTO NOT SUPPORTING THE POLICY. -- MORE  
1546MST 29 06 86

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MAHATHIR-NEP 3 KOTA BAHARU

+IF THE MALAYS NO LONGER SUPPORT THE POLICY, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT IT. IF IT FAILS TO BE IMPLEMENTED, THEN WHO WILL BENEFIT?+ HE ASKED.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT AS HE HAD OFTEN EXPLAINED, THE NEP WAS AIMED AT ENSURING THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MALAYS WAS AT PAR WITH THAT OF THE OTHER COMMUNITIES IN ALL FIELDS.

HE SAID IT WAS NOT AIMED SOLELY AT ENSURING THAT THE MALAYS HELD SHARES IN COMPANIES BUT ALSO THAT THEY WERE EMPLOYED IN SPECIFIC POSTS IN THE COMPANIES BASED ON THEIR ABILITY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEP WAS BASED ON ECONOMIC GROWTH, WITHOUT WHICH THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT DISTRIBUTE BENEFITS.

HE SAID THAT AS THE ECONOMY WHICH USED TO GROW AT EIGHT PERCENT ANNUALLY WAS NOW DOWN TO POSSIBLY 2.6 PERCENT, IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO CREATE JOB OPPORTUNITIES SO THAT BUMIPUTERA GRADUATES WOULD NOT BE JOBLESS.

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1554MST 29 06 86

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MAHATHIR-NEP 4 KOTA BAHARU

+AS SUCH, WE MUST NOW FOCUS ON STIMULATING THE ECONOMY AND NOT BUMIPUTERA SHARE PARTICIPATION,+ HE SAID.

IF THERE WERE NEW COMPANIES TO BE SET UP, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD EXEMPT THEM FROM THE CONDITION OF BUMIPUTERA SHARE PARTICIPATION SO LONG AS THEIR ESTABLISHMENT WOULD CREATE JOBS FOR BUMIPUTERAS, SKILLED OR SEMI-SKILLED, HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO REMINDED THE PEOPLE NOT TO BE EASILY TAKEN IN BY THE PROPAGANDA OF CERTAIN PARTIES TO THE EXTENT OF LOSING FAITH IN THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS POLICIES BECAUSE THEY WOULD ONLY LOSE OUT.

HE SAID THAT GOVERNMENT POLICIES SUCH AS THE TURNKEY POLICY FOR LARGE-SCALE PROJECTS WERE IMPLEMENTED FOR SPECIFIC REASONS LIKE COST-SAVING AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY FROM FOREIGN CONTRACTORS.

SUCH A POLICY ALSO ENABLED BUMIPUTRAS TO OBTAIN 30 PERCENT PARTICIPATION AND THEY WOULD BENEFIT THROUGH LEARNING FROM FOREIGN CONTRACTORS.

ON BUMIPUTERA CONTRACTORS HAVING LOAN REPAYMENT PROBLEMS, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD CALLED ON THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND BANKS NOT TO PRESS THE BORROWERS BUT TO ASSIST THEM SO THAT THEY REPAY THEIR LOANS.

IN THIS WAY, THE BANKS WOULD ALSO NOT SUFFER LOSSES, HE ADDED.

-- BERNAMA  
1610MST 29 06 86