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MAHATHIR-INDEPENDENCE  
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KUALA LUMPUR, AUG 30 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD REMINDED THE PEOPLE TONIGHT THAT THEY THEMSELVES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR DEFENDING THE COUNTRY'S INDEPENDENCE ATTAINED 29 YEARS AGO.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT IF THE COUNTRY CAME UNDER ATTACK BY A FOREIGN POWER INTENDING TO PUT IT UNDER COLONISATION AGAIN, MALAYSIANS THEMSELVES HAD TO TAKE UP ARMS TO DEFEND THE NATION.

SPEAKING AT A DINNER GIVEN FOR ABOUT 650 MERDEKA AND ANTI-MALAYAN UNION FIGHTERS FROM THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY HERE, HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THERE MIGHT BE COUNTRIES SYMPATHISING WITH MALAYSIA, THEIR PEOPLE WOULD NOT DEFEND +OUR NATION+ IF IT WAS INVADED.

+IF WE ARE ATTACKED, WE OURSELVES WILL HAVE TO BEAR ARMS TO DEFEND OUR COUNTRY. OTHER PEOPLE WILL ONLY SYMPATHISE AND SHED TEARS BUT WILL NOT HELP OR GO TO WAR (ON OUR BEHALF) UNLESS IT IS TO THEIR GAIN,+ HE ADDED.

HE SAID THIS ATTITUDE WAS CLEARLY SHOWN WHEN AN ISLAMIC COUNTRY, AFGHANISTAN, WAS INVADED. THE AFGHANS HAD TO FIGHT THEIR OWN WAR TO REGAIN THEIR FREEDOM. -- MORE  
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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR STRESSED THAT THE AFGHANS WERE STILL FIGHTING TO FREE THEIR COUNTRY WHILE OTHER COUNTRIES ONLY SYMPATHISED.

+MANY OF OUR PEOPLE SAID THEY (AFGHANS) ARE MUSLIMS AND ISLAM CUTS ACROSS ALL NATIONAL BOUNDARIES BUT THEN THE QUESTION OF NATIONALISM STILL CROPPED UP IN CONNECTION WITH THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN,+ HE ADDED.

ONLY THE NATIONALISTIC FERVOUR OF THE AFGHANS SPURRED THEM TO SACRIFICE THEIR LIVES, PROPERTY AND EVERYTHING ELSE TO DEFEND THEIR COUNTRY.

+MANY OF OUR COUNTRY'S PEOPLE HAD SYMPATHISED WITH THEIR PLIGHT BUT I HAVE YET TO SEE THESE PEOPLE WHO TALK SO MUCH TAKE UP ARMS TO DEFEND AFGHANISTAN, AND THEIR REASON (FOR NOT DOING THIS) IS THAT THEY ARE MALAYSIANS AND MALAYSIA (AND NOT AFGHANISTAN) IS THEIR COUNTRY,+ THE PRIME MINISTER ADDED.

HE EMPHASISED THAT TO DEFEND THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE COUNTRY THAT HAD BEEN SO HARD WON, ALL LEVELS OF THE POPULATION IN MALAYSIA MUST BE UNITED.

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+WHEN DEMANDING INDEPENDENCE BEFORE, WE WERE THEN FACING THE MIGHTY BRITISH GOVERNMENT WHILE WE WERE WEAK IN ALL ASPECTS, BUT WITH UNITY, WE WON INDEPENDENCE FOR OUR COUNTRY,+ HE SAID.

HE REMINDED THE PEOPLE AGAINST THINKING THAT THIS SPIRIT OF UNITY WAS NO LONGER NECESSARY AFTER THE COUNTRY HAD GAINED INDEPENDENCE.

ACCORDING TO THE PRIME MINISTER, IF THIS UNITY WAS NOT CHERISHED AND THE COUNTRY BECAME WEAK, OTHER QUARTERS WOULD TRY TO SUBJUGATE THE COUNTRY AS HAD HAPPENED TO KAMPUCHEA.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR EXPLAINED THAT THE UNITY HE MEANT WAS NOT JUST INTER-RACIAL UNITY BUT ENCOMPASSED INTER-GENERATION UNITY.

+IF THE NEW GENERATION NO LONGER RESPECTS THE OLD GENERATION, THEN DISUNITY HAS OCCURRED IN OUR COUNTRY,+ HE SAID. -- MORE  
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HE ALSO REGRETTED THAT SOME OF THE YOUTH HAD FORGOTTEN THE SACRIFICES OF THE OLD GENERATION AND +NO LONGER EXPRESS THEIR LOVE FOR THE COUNTRY BUT ONLY SHOW A WILLINGNESS TO REAP THE WEALTH MADE POSSIBLE BY THE STRUGGLE OF THE PAST GENERATION.+

THE PRIME MINISTER HOWEVER WAS PROUD OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE YOUNG AS A WHOLE IN PRESERVING THE STABILITY OF THE COUNTRY, PARTICULARLY THEIR SUPPORT THAT HAD GIVEN THE BARISAN NASIONAL A SWEEPING VICTORY IN THE RECENT GENERAL ELECTION.

ON NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS THIS YEAR, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE CELEBRATIONS HAD GREAT SIGNIFICANCE IN THAT EACH GROUP IN SOCIETY WAS NOT FORGOTTEN AND ALL WERE OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE.

+MALAYSIA BELONGS TO ALL OF US AND IS OUR JOINT RESPONSIBILITY, BUT IF EACH SECTION THINKS ONLY OF ITS OWN RIGHTS, THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE COUNTRY WILL EVENTUALLY BE LOST,+ HE ADDED.

PRESENT AT THE DINNER ORGANISED BY THE UTUSAN MELAYU NEWSPAPER GROUP WAS AGRICULTURE MINISTER AND NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS CENTRAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN DATUK SERI SANUSI JUNID. -- BERNAMA  
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