

Dr M: Chauvinism will not sway us

Pledge on moderation

MSY 19 SEP 1986

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Umno will maintain its moderate stance but will not compromise on the implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP), Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Umno president said the party would not respond to the chauvinistic trend among the urban Chinese by turning Umno into a racist organisation.

He said Umno would continue with its policy of multi-racialism as it subscribed to the concept of co-operation in the coalition.

The party will continue to uphold its policy of co-operation with the other

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races despite the harsh allegations hurled at it and the various attempts to provoke the Malays with attempts to make the \$2.6 billion BMF scandal appear as "a failure of the Bumiputeras".

"The Pan-Electric Industries scan-

dal resulted in the loss of \$16 billion among Malaysian Chinese but reaction was not as vocal as that which greeted the BMF case," Dr Mahathir said at the opening of the Umno general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre.

He said there had been no limit to the attacks on Umno and the Malays but the party and the community had chosen to remain silent and avoid retaliating in the interest of harmony.

The chauvinists had even talked as if the Malays had no rights in their own country and as if Malaysia was originally not a Malay country but part of a

foreign land.

But despite all this, Umno which heads the Barisan Nasional Government, will continue to uphold justice among the races. "The policy of having a balanced development among the races in Malaysia will continue."

Present during the opening where Dr Mahathir took one hour and 35 minutes to read his 34-page speech were leaders of component parties of the Barisan Nasional. Each time he stopped, the delegates applauded.

On the NEP, the Prime Minister said the policy would continue to be implemented until its objectives are achieved.

"This policy has already reflected the willingness of Umno and the Malays to come to a compromise with the non-Bumiputeras," he said.

Those who opposed the policy should not think that because Umno and the Malays had remained silent all this while, they were in the wrong or weak.

He said though the Malays fought for independence in order not to be always poor in their own country, it did not mean that they had any inten-

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tion of robbing anyone of his rights.

"But don't anyone try to rob us of ours," he said to thunderous applause from the delegates and observers.

Dr Mahathir said the non-Bumiputeras had been long aware that the objective of the NEP would not be achieved when its period of implementation expires and had threatened "that there will be tension if efforts to achieve the objectives are continued after 1990".

The Bumiputeras had not wanted to press the matter or to debate it because they did not want to give the impression that the races in Malaysia were not in agreement.

The debate and the ensuing tension would only serve to frighten off local and foreign investors, he said.

The party president reminded critics of the policy that the Malays wanted harmony, stability and strong economic growth but not at the expense of their dignity.

"We will not trade our respectability to the extent that our grandchildren will be unable to lift their heads."

The critics should realise that the Malays had made many sacrifices in the interest of harmony in multi-racial Malaysia.

The Malays no longer constitute a Bangsa Melayu or Malay nation but are now merely "kaum Melayu" (Malay community) in a Malaysian nation.

They even rejected the

extremist group among them and fought the group in the general election in order that multi-racialism would prevail in the country.

On the growing trend towards chauvinism among the urban Chinese, the Umno president said his party was disappointed, especially after a lot of concessions had been given to that community.

Though the Chinese-based parties in the BN did not win the seats they were given to contest and Umno had won almost all the seats allocated to it, the number of non-Malay Ministers had not been reduced.

In relation to this, Dr Mahathir criticised the DAP for arousing anti-Malay sentiments among the Chinese to gain popularity.

"After whipping up anti-Malay feelings among the Chinese and rejecting the concept of inter-racial co-operation as advocated by the Barisan Nasional, DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang now wants racial polarisation to be checked," he said.

The Prime Minister said apart from the opposition parties, there were many other critics of the Government who were out to create instability in the country.

They claimed that the Government was so riddled with corruption and malpractices that it no longer had the support of the people.

The critics were proven wrong when the election results showed that support for the Gov-

ernment had not declined.

Dr Mahathir criticised them for their unbalanced criticism.

For instance, while they blew up the problems of Makuwasa and the BMF, they remained almost silent over scandals perpetrated by non-Bumiputeras.

He cited the example of how the misappropriation of funds of two Hong Kong banks by several Malaysian bankers (not from Bank Bumiputera) had tarnished the reputation of Malaysians in the British colony but no one made any noise about it. Less noise was made about the Pan-El affairs as well.

On the problems of Makuwasa, he said one of the company's aims was to sell the Government's tin stock to offset the losses resulting from the actions of the London Metal Exchange.

He said no individual gained personally from the deal and that the action was to rescue the tin industry.

Dr Mahathir said critics of the Government were aided by the foreign Press owned by Zionists. A few local journalists may have also been brainwashed into their way of thinking.

"It is no longer necessary for the foreign Press to subvert our life values and culture as we ourselves have taken over this role."

On foreign policy, the Umno president said the Government would give priority to Asean as a regional pact though the objective of establishing a common market had yet to be achieved.