

MODERATE STAND FOR STABILITY

FRONT 21 SEP 1986

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — The three-day 37th Umno general assembly, which ended today, reaffirmed its support for the Government and its moderate approach in the formulation and implementation of national policies.

Party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Umno will continue with this stand in the interests of harmony and stability in the country.

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He said this was testimony of the party's responsibility towards the multi-racial nation.

"This attitude has enabled Umno to continue with its struggle and duties and help form the Government," he told reporters after the assembly.

"This moderate stand has also made Umno aware of the realities of the multi-racial society."

He hoped Umno's moderation and concern with national stability and harmony would be an example to other groups.

Criticisms levelled at Umno were, therefore, unfounded.

The Prime Minister said although there were some strong

views aired during the assembly, the members on the whole had a moderate attitude towards current issues.

"We take a realistic view of the situation in the country and we take into consideration the opinions of others in carrying out our plans."

The general assembly had been dominated by the controversy surrounding the New Economic Policy (NEP) and the National Education Policy.

Some strong views were aired by delegates

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OBJECTIVES OF THE N.E.P. MUST BE ACHIEVED: MAHATHIR

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on political and economic resolutions.

Dr Mahathir said the objectives of the NEP should not be questioned as these were aimed at improving the standard of living of the people through a restructuring of society and eradication of poverty, regardless of race.

"When these objectives are achieved is not important. What is important is that they are achieved," he said, reiterating the point he made in his address when opening the assembly on Thursday.

He added that the NEP's objectives would remain, either within the present framework of the policy or in another new strategy, under a different name.

On the atmosphere of the assembly, Dr Mahathir said there was generally a feeling of euphoria among the delegates "because the party had just won the general election, and Umno has

been able to form the Government once again with other members of the Barisan Nasional.

"However, there is also some unhappiness over the criticisms levelled at them, particularly since these criticisms came from those they considered friends, not enemies."

On complaints that the Umno general assemblies had passed numerous resolutions but had not implemented many of them, Dr Mahathir said this was not the case.

What delegates wanted was that the Government should remain firm in its intention to implement whatever policies had been decided for the people.

And this, he added, the Government was prepared to do.

Dr Mahathir also said Umno leaders would help party members who had been "maligned" as a result of following orders "to the best of our ability".

This was in response to a point raised by Youth

delegate Fahmi Ibrahim who, during the debate on the resolution of education, said some Umno members who had been faithful and loyal in following the orders of leaders had "suffered" at the hands of certain quarters — resulting in a few losing their posts or being demoted.

He had asked why had the party leaders not come to the rescue of such faithful followers after their misfortune.

The Prime Minister also said the Barisan Nasional Government would concentrate on providing its Members of Parliament adequate briefing and information on national policies.

Earlier when replying to points raised by delegates during the three days of debate, Dr Mahathir said the drop in the price of Malaysian commodities in the world market was not the result of his open attack on the big powers.

He said even if his speeches had been mild, the big powers would still

not help Malaysia.

The Umno president expressed his disappointment that a delegate from Terengganu had blamed his outspokenness for the decline in commodity prices.

He admitted that his speeches were sometimes hard-hitting but they were well prepared.

"I think carefully before I make a speech," he said, in an unexpectedly short reply.

Dr Mahathir took the floor for less than 15 minutes during which he kept to a few issues which were raised by delegates.

On the criticisms against his speeches, he said the big powers would do whatever they wanted irrespective of what he said.

He cited Australia as a country which had never attacked the big powers but still suffered the consequences of their manipulation.

"Although Australia had never hit out at the United States, the latter still sold its wheat to the

Soviet Union at a low price. As a result, Australia is not able to sell its wheat."

Dr Mahathir said that when he delivered his speeches, he dealt on what was right and he was not being biased.

What was important, he added, was that firm action should be taken whenever necessary.

He did not see why he should not be outspoken when he was abroad as he did the same in the nation.

On the three-day assembly, he said, the New Economic Policy (NEP) had been one of the main issues raised and debated at the Assembly.

The delegates had expected Dr Mahathir to speak on more issues, including the rift with his deputy, Datuk Musa Hitam.

Asked later whether he wanted to put the issue to rest, he said: "You can assume so."

He added that Datuk Musa had also indicated that he wanted to put the matter to rest.