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FMP-MAHATHIR (UNITY) R'R'R'

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KUALA LUMPUR, MARCH 21 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY URGED THE PEOPLE TO HELP PRESERVE UNITY, SECURITY AND STABILITY IF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS TO BE SUSTAINED.

+THERE ARE MANY LESSONS FROM HISTORY, NOT ONLY OF OUR OWN BUT ALSO OF OTHER COUNTRIES, THAT WE MUST TAKE HEED OF,+ HE SAID WHEN TABLING THE FIFTH MALAYSIA PLAN IN THE DEWAN RAKYAT.

HE SAID: +ONE LESSON THAT IS CLEARLY DRIVEN INTO US IS THAT NO NATION CAN SURVIVE FOR LONG IF IT IS CONTINUALLY DIVIDED AND IF ITS CITIZENS ARE EXCESSIVELY OBSESSED WITH THEIR OWN NARROW INTERESTS.

+STABILITY IS A CRUCIAL PRECONDITION FOR ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT AS WITHOUT IT THERE WILL BE UNCERTAINTY.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO SAID EXTREMISM WAS A POWERFUL DESTABILISING FORCE, ADDING THAT +THERE IS NO PLACE FOR EXTREMISM IN OUR SOCIETY AS IT WILL ERODE AND DESTROY ALL OUR HARD-WON ACHIEVEMENTS+. --MORE

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID EXTREMISTS WERE OBSESSED WITH CREATING CONFLICT AND WERE WILLING TO SACRIFICE PEACE AND STABILITY. +SUCH AN ATTITUDE IS ABNORMAL AND ANY FORM OF ABNORMALITIES MUST BE OVERCOME BY US ALL.+

HE SAID EXTREMISTS HAD NO HESITATION TO USE FORCE IN THEIR BID TO GAIN FOLLOWERS, ATTENTION AND POWER AND THAT IN DOING SO THEY TENDED TO LOSE A SENSE OF PROPORTION AND A MORE BALANCED OUTLOOK SO NECESSARY IN A MULTIRACIAL SOCIETY LIKE MALAYSIA.

+IT IS SAD TO SEE THESE EXTREMIST GROUPS MIMICKING AND APEING THE PRACTICES OF OTHER COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE DIFFERENT HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS.

+WHILE THEY THEMSELVES CONDEMN OTHERS FOR APEING THE WAYS OF THE WEST AND HABITS WHICH ARE FOREIGN TO MALAYSIANS, THEY ARE EQUALLY GUILTY OF APEING THE HABITS AND PRACTICES OF OTHER COUNTRIES WHICH ARE ALIEN TO OUR SOCIETY.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IF THESE EXTREMIST GROUPS WERE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE TO FLOURISH, THEY WOULD CAUSE DISSESSION, UNDERMINE THE NATION'S UNITY OF PURPOSE AND IN THE END WOULD PRODUCE AN EVEN MORE SEGREGATED SOCIETY. -- MORE

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HE SAID THESE GROUPS DID NOT HAVE THE NATIONAL WELLBEING AS THEIR OVERRIDING INTEREST, BUT WERE ONLY BENT ON +SEEKING THE ATTENTION, POWER AND GLORY+ WHICH THEY CONSIDERED AS THEIR RIGHT AND WERE PREPARED TO ACHIEVE THEIR OWN SELFISH ENDS AT ANY COST.

+IF THEY SUCCEED, WE WILL FAIL IN OUR EFFORTS TO BUILD A UNITED, JUST, STABLE AND PROGRESSIVE SOCIETY. WE CANNOT, AND MUST NEVER, ALLOW EXTREMISM TO GROW IN OUR MIDST.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO TOOK TO TASK CERTAIN GROUPS WHICH CLAIMED THAT THE BENEFITS OF DEVELOPMENT HAD BEEN MONOPOLISED BY ONE PARTICULAR ETHNIC GROUP TO THE EXCLUSION OF THE OTHERS.

+THOSE WHO CONTINUALLY DO SO HAVE ONLY ONE INTENTION -- TO PROMOTE DISCORD, DISUNITY AND TO DESTABILISE THE COUNTRY.+

HE SAID THERE WAS AMPLE EVIDENCE TO INDICATE THAT ALL MALAYSIANS HAD SHARED AND ENJOYED THE BENEFITS OF DEVELOPMENT. -- MORE

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HOWEVER, HE SAID, IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT IN ANY SOCIETY THAT WAS UNDERGOING DEVELOPMENT THERE WOULD BE THOSE WHO WOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE A LITTLE MORE ADVANTAGE OF THE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES.

THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT GUARANTEE THAT EVERYONE WOULD HAVE AN EQUAL SHARE IN THE BENEFITS OF DEVELOPMENT, HE SAID, ADDING THAT THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES WOULD HOWEVER ENSURE THAT DIFFERENT GROUPS WOULD BENEFIT FROM THE VARIOUS ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID ALTHOUGH ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE YEARS AHEAD WOULD SEEM TO BE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE IT WOULD NEVERTHELESS CONTINUE TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL MALAYSIANS TO SHARE IN THE BENEFITS OF DEVELOPMENT AND TO IMPROVE THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING.

+BUT IT IS CERTAIN THAT WHATEVER PROGRESS IN ALLEVIATING POVERTY AND RESTRUCTURING SOCIETY THAT WE WILL HAVE ACHIEVED BY THEN, THERE WILL STILL BE ECONOMIC IMBALANCES AMONG THE MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE COUNTRY,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID EFFORTS TO ERADICATE POVERTY AND TO CORRECT ECONOMIC IMBALANCES MUST CONTINUE IN LINE WITH THE OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE OF NATIONAL UNITY. -- MORE
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+MOST CERTAINLY WE CANNOT ALLOW A SLIDE BACK TOWARDS THE OLD INEQUITABLE SITUATION, AFTER 1990. AS LONG AS ECONOMIC IMBALANCES PERSIST WE MUST ALSO PERSIST IN OUR EFFORTS TO TAKE CORRECTIVE MEASURES,+ HE SAID.

SAYING THAT SOCIETY MUST CHANGE WITH THE TIMES TO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AND PROSPER, HE ADDED THAT THE TIME FOR MALAYSIANS TO CHANGE WAS LONG OVERDUE AND THAT THEY COULD NOT AFFORD TO REST ON THE LAURELS OF THEIR PAST ACHIEVEMENTS.

+WE ARE NOW ENTERING A NEW PHASE IN THE HISTORY OF OUR DEVELOPMENT, AND ARE NOW FACING DIFFICULTIES IN THE INTERNATIONAL AS WELL AS DOMESTIC FRONTS,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THE PEOPLE MUST RECOGNISE THAT THE MALAYSIAN ECONOMY WAS GOING THROUGH AN UNCERTAIN PERIOD AND THAT +WE MUST NOT ONLY LEARN TO LIVE WITH IT BUT MUST ALSO LEARN TO OVERCOME IT+.

+WHAT IS MOST VITAL IS THAT WE DO NOT LOSE OUR CONFIDENCE. WE MUST ALL HAVE THE CONFIDENCE THAT THE PRESENT ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS WE ARE FACING ARE NOT PERMANENT, THAT ALL THINGS WILL PASS, AND THAT WE WILL OVERCOME THEM IN TIME,+ HE ADDED. -- MORE
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HE SAID THE PEOPLE MUST ALSO RECOGNISE THAT THERE WERE THOSE WHOSE BUSINESS WAS TO CREATE INSTABILITY AS THEY TENDED TO THRIVE ON THE MISFORTUNE OF OTHERS.

+THESE INCLUDE THE PROPHETS OF DOOM WHOSE INHERENT AND BASELESS PESSIMISM UNDERMINES CONFIDENCE. THEY WISH TO PERSUADE US THAT THERE IS NO FUTURE FOR THE COUNTRY,+ HE SAID.

THEN, HE SAID, THERE WERE THE FINANCIAL MANIPULATORS, SPECULATORS AND ASSET-STRIPPERS WHO ADDED TO THE CONFUSION AND UNCERTAINTY AS THEY STROVE TO MAKE EXCESSIVE PROFITS, ESPECIALLY ON THE STOCK EXCHANGE.

+THE OPENNESS OF OUR ECONOMIC SYSTEM IS NOWHERE BETTER ILLUSTRATED THAN BY THE FACT THAT THOSE WHO WISH TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SYSTEM, AND MANIPULATE IT, CAN ACHIEVE THEIR SELFISH OBJECTIVES AT THE EXPENSE OF UNDERMINING OUR ECONOMIC SYSTEM,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT IN THE END THE MATURITY OF THE NATION WOULD BE JUDGED NOT ONLY BY THE EXTENT OF ITS ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS BUT ALSO BY ITS ABILITY TO DEAL SUCCESSFULLY WITH PRESSURES, TENSIONS AND THE MANY FORCES OF INSTABILITY, WITHOUT AT THE SAME TIME DESTROYING THE FABRIC OF DEMOCRACY ON WHICH THE NATION WAS BUILT. -- BERNAMA

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