

PM: PBS PLAN IS NOT HEALTHY

'Their counter-proposals lopsided'

By RUSDI MUSTAPHA and WINSLOW WONG

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has described the counter-proposals of Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) to resolve the 11-month-old Sabah crisis as "lopsided" and serving only the interest of one group.

He said it was not healthy for one party to have a two-third majority in a multi-racial society like Sabah.

"From what I read in the new-

spapers, the PBS only wants a two-third majority.

"This means the PBS can change the State Constitution without the consent of other parties.

"In my opinion, this is not healthy if only one party can do this," he told reporters after an Umno Supreme Council meeting.

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Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said if the people wanted changes in the Constitution, all parties had to agree.

"As we know, the Barisan Nasional is represented by many political parties and races so that no one group can have the power to change the Federal Constitution on its own.

"If we want to change the Constitution all the parties must agree," he added.

The PBS had submitted the counter-proposals to Dr Mahathir early this week. One of the proposals states that a coalition government be formed with Umno and Berjaya only after the State election on May 5 and 6.

And should one of the parties obtain a clear two-third majority, no coalition is to be formed.

Under the original *Sabah Formula* proposed by Dr Mahathir during his visit on March 25, the coalition is to be formed regardless of which party wins the most number of seats.

PBS president Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan, who is also the

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Still
the best

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Chief Minister, contends that the formula did not touch at all on a coalition government but on co-operation among the three parties.

This, he said, the PBS was prepared to do.

The PBS also wants all court action against Datuk Pairin and the State Government withdrawn.

(Umno president Tun Datu Mustapha Datu Harun had filed a writ challenging Datuk Pairin's appointment as Chief Minister. Judgment will be delivered on April 19, four days after nomination day.

(Independent Assemblyman for Merotai Ghapur Salleh had also sought an injunction to restrain the Elections Commission from holding a State election. His application was rejected by the High Court on March 18. His counsel then said they would appeal.)

Dr Mahathir said the *Sabah Formula* still stood and that "it is so far the best in solving the Sabah crisis."

"If there are no changes and the principles have not been touched, the Barisan Nasional is still open minded on the matter to resolve the crisis," he said.

He added that other political parties such as Pasok and the Sabah Consolidated Chinese Party (SCCP) in Sabah had also applied to join the Barisan.

On Umno's stand on the Sabah crisis, Dr Mahathir said the party's political bureau had been given a full mandate.

He said since the Sabah politics "is fluid," the bureau had been given the authority to make decisions based on the latest development in Sabah.

He said "if we make a decision now, there will be changes later on" in Sabah.

Dr Mahathir said the supreme council meeting, which lasted more than four hours, did not discuss a date for the general election and the resignation of Datuk Musa Hitam as the Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister.

In Kota Kinabalu, the PBS Supreme Council convened a meeting at 7.30pm to discuss Dr Mahathir's response to the proposals.

Datuk Pairin is expected to call a Press conference tomorrow to state the party's stand.

Meanwhile, the Inspector-General of Police, Tan Sri Haniff Omar, arrived here today. PBS officials said he would pay a courtesy call on Datuk Pairin tomorrow.