

Dr M on when a DPM should keep his views to himself

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MASJID TANAH, Sun. — A Deputy Prime Minister should not make public his disagreements with the Prime Minister because it would undermine the integrity and position of the Prime Minister.

Speaking at the opening of the Alor Gajah Umno divisional delegates meeting this morning, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said a Deputy Prime Minister must at all times show his total support for the Prime Minister although he might harbour disagreements and criticisms.

A Deputy Prime Minister must also always strive to ensure that the Prime Minister gets 100 per cent support from the party and its members.

"The support is not really for the Prime Minister but more for the party to ensure that unity and solidarity remain intact in the party.

with him on a lot of things, but I realised that as Deputy Prime Minister, it was my duty to ensure that Tun Hussein got the total support of Umno."

However, Dr Mahathir said this was only his personal philosophy and others were not obliged to subscribe to it.

"I do not want to say that the same treatment must be given to me. What can I do if others do not want to support me."

The Umno president also wanted Umno members to avoid contests in the coming party elections because he felt that these contests would only split the party.

He said although contests were provided in a democracy it was not compulsory to hold them.

"There may be those who would disagree with me and say that contests would not af-

"Unity and total support will enable the leaders to become effective so that the party will be commanding."

He said when Tunku Abdul Rahman was the Prime Minister, the late Tun Razak as his deputy did not agree with him totally.

"They were mere mortals and there had to be times when they disagreed with one another.

Total support

"As Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman had the say and, inevitably, Tun Razak would sometimes feel hurt. This I knew because I knew Tun Razak quite well.

"But Tun Razak did not resort to telling the public about his disagreements with the Tunku because he knew that this would only undermine the position of Tunku Abdul Rahman and contradict our culture. It would erode the public's respect for Tunku as a Prime Minister.

"Subsequently, when Tun Razak became Prime Minister, there were times when the late Tun Dr Ismail and subsequently Tun Hussein Onn did not agree with him.

"I do not know but I feel there were occasions when they could not agree with each other. But, nonetheless, they supported the Prime Minister, not so much to defend him but more for the sake of the party.

"When I became deputy to Tun Hussein Onn, I disagreed

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fect the party. They would also say that democracy would survive through contests in the elections.

"But I do not think so. I fear that these contests would only split the party. I may be wrong but that is my observation.

"But, if there were to be any contests, they should be carried out in a friendly atmosphere. There should be no need for us to work too hard to win, travel here and there, throwing money all around, resorting to dubious tactics and spreading lies."

He said Umno members should not take part in contests just for the sake of living up to the word democracy.

"Democracy could bring happiness and sorrow. We should gauge the situation first before plunging into any contests. They should be avoided if we feel that it would lead to adverse results.

"Winning should be secondary. What is important is enhancing solidarity and being able to remain friends after the contest. There is no reason for us to tell our supporters not to show any respect for our rivals."

Dr Mahathir stressed that he was not campaigning to be president of the party but to safeguard the interests of Umno, the destiny of the Malays, religion, the fate of the nation and its people.