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MAHATHIR-TRAITORS R'R'R'

BM

ALOR SETAR, MARCH 11 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TONIGHT DESCRIBED AS +TRAITORS+ TENGKU RAZALEIGH HAMZAH AND DATUK RAIS YATIM, AND THE 11 FORMER UMNO MEMBERS WHO TOOK COURT ACTION WHICH RESULTED IN THE PARTY BEING DECLARED AN ILLEGAL SOCIETY.

+I HAVE NEVER UTTERED THE WORD +TRAITORS+ BUT TONIGHT I REGARD THE 11 AND TENGKU RAZALEIGH (HAMZAH) AS TRAITORS,+ HE SAID AT A GATHERING OF 5,000 FORMER UMNO MEMBERS AT STADIUM DATUK SYED OMAR HERE.

IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT TENGKU RAZALEIGH, THE FORMER TRADE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER WHO LOST TO DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR IN THE FIGHT FOR THE UMNO PRESIDENCY LAST YEAR, WAS BEHIND THE 11 FORMER UMNO MEMBERS WHO TOOK COURT ACTION AGAINST UMNO.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT DATUK RAIS, THE FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER, WHO WAS TAKING COURT ACTION TO, AMONG OTHER THINGS, QUASH THE DECISION OF THE REGISTRAR OF SOCIETIES IN ACCEPTING THE REGISTRATION OF UMNO BARU, WAS A TRAITOR TO THE MALAY RACE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS PRO TEM PRESIDENT OF UMNO BARU, SAID UMNO WAS SET UP ON MAY 11, 1946 IN JOHOR TO STRUGGLE FOR THE MALAYS AND FIGHT THE BRITISH WHO WANTED TO ERODE THE MALAY RIGHTS THROUGH THE MALAYAN UNION PROPOSAL. -- MORE
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+BUT, I FEEL VERY SAD BECAUSE SOLELY FOR THEIR PERSONAL INTEREST, THERE ARE PEOPLE IN UMNO WHO ARE WILLING TO BETRAY THE STRUGGLE OF THE MALAYS BY UMNO,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT TENGKU RAZALEIGH AND THE 11 FORMER UMNO MEMBERS WHO TOOK COURT ACTION AGAINST THE PARTY WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTED INTO UMNO BARU.

HE SAID THE MALAY SPIRIT OF STRUGGLE WOULD CONTINUE TO FLOURISH IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER UMNO BARU EXISTED OR WAS DEREGISTERED.

+THE ORGANISATION MAY NOT BE THERE BUT THE MALAY SPIRIT PROJECTED BY UMNO WILL REMAIN,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR STRESSED THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE AND LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED UNTIL THE NEW UMNO BECAME EFFECTIVE. --- MORE

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HE SAID THAT HE DID NOT EXPECT UMNO TO HAVE PEOPLE WHO WERE PREPARED TO DESTROY THE PARTY FOR THE SAKE OF ACHIEVING THEIR AMBITIONS, INCLUDING WANTING THE POST OF PRIME MINISTER.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR REJECTED CLAIMS THAT AS THE HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER HE COULD USE HIS POWER TO PREVENT THE OLD UMNO FROM BEING DECLARED AN ILLEGAL PARTY.

+BUT IF I USED THAT POWER, I AM SURE THERE WILL BE ALLEGATIONS THROWN AT ME,+ HE SAID.

+THEY MADE UMNO BE DECLARED AN ILLEGAL SOCIETY AND NOW ARE TRYING TO HAMPER THE RUNNING OF UMNO BARU WHICH IS CONTINUING THE STRUGGLE OF THE OLD UMNO FOR THE INTEREST OF THE MALAYS. YET, I AM THE ONE BEING BLAMED,+ HE SAID.

HE DISMISSED AS +UNTRUE AND SLANDEROUS+ ALLEGATIONS THAT EVERY APPLICATION TO JOIN UMNO BARU SHOULD INCLUDE AN OATH OF LOYALTY TO HIM. -- MORE

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR THEN SAID THAT THE CONDITION TO BECOME MEMBERS OF THE NEW UMNO WAS LOYALTY TO THE PARTY AS THIS WOULD CHECK MEMBERS FROM TAKING ACTION WHICH COULD DESTROY THE PARTY.

HE ALSO SAID THAT EVERY MEMBER JOINING UMNO BARU WAS REQUIRED TO AGREE TRANSFERRING THE PROPERTY OF THE OLD UMNO TO THE NEW UMNO TO FACILITATE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE PARTY LEADERSHIP AND THE PUBLIC TRUSTEE, WHICH WAS HOLDING ALL THE PARTY'S PROPERTY, INCLUDING UMNO BUILDINGS.

+IF NOT, THE PUBLIC TRUSTEE WILL HAVE TO APPROACH EVERY PARTY MEMBER FROM THE 1.4 MILLION MEMBERS TO SETTLE THE MATTER AND IT WILL TAKE THE PUBLIC TRUSTEE ABOUT 25 YEARS TO COMPLETE THIS EXERCISE,+ HE SAID.

ACCORDING TO PROCEDURES, EVERY MEMBER HAD TO SHARE THE PARTY'S PROPERTY OR DEBTS, HE POINTED OUT.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE VALUE OF PROPERTY OF THE OLD UMNO, INCLUDING ITS HEADQUARTERS BUILDING AT THE PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE IN KUALA LUMPUR, EXCEEDED \$1 BILLION. -- MORE

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THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO SAID THAT IT WAS TENGKU RAZALEIGH'S DECISION TO PUT UP THE PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE (PWTC) COMPLEX AT A COST OF \$330 MILLION.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT HE WANTED TO PUT UP A BUILDING FOR ONLY \$77 MILLION BECAUSE AT THAT TIME, UMNO OWNED EQUITY WORTH ONLY THAT AMOUNT AND THROUGH THIS WAY, IT NEED NOT BE IN DEBT.

HE SAID THAT THE DEBTS INCURRED BY UMNO FOR PUTTING UP THE COMPLEX SOARED TO \$360 MILLION BECAUSE INTEREST ON THE PRINCIPAL SUM HAD NOT BEEN PAID FOR THREE YEARS.

HE URGED FORMER UMNO MEMBERS TO BE WARY OF PEOPLE USING MONEY TO WOO THEM TO JOIN A NEW PARTY WHICH THEY WERE SPONSORING.

THEY WOULD LOOK FOR EX-UMNO LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS WHO HAD NOT BEEN INCLUDED IN THE UMNO BARU PRO TEM COMMITTEES AND OFFER THEM POSTS IN THE PARTY TO BE FORMED AND ASSURE THEM THEY WOULD BE CANDIDATES IN THE GENERAL ELECTION, HE SAID. -- MORE

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ADVISED THOSE WHO WERE NOT APPOINTED TO THE UMNO BARU PRO TEM COMMITTEES TO BE PATIENT AND WAIT FOR THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD.

IF THEY WERE SINCERE AND WORKED FOR THE INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE, THEY WOULD BE ELECTED TO POSTS, HE SAID.

IN HIS SPEECH WHICH LASTED TWO HOURS, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR TRACED THE MALAY STRUGGLE DURING THE COLONIAL DAYS, UMNO'S FORMATION IN 1946 AND HOW A SPLIT IN UMNO RESULTED IN THE FORMATION OF THE INDEPENDENT MALAYAN PARTY (IMP) AND PARTI NEGARA BY DATUK ONN.

KEDAH MENTERI BESAR DATUK SERI HAJI OSMAN AROFF, IN HIS SPEECH, GAVE AN ASSURANCE THAT ALL FORMER UMNO MEMBERS IN THE STATE WOULD BE ACCEPTED INTO THE NEW UMNO AND THAT THEY WOULD FULLY SUPPORT THE LEADERSHIP OF DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR.

ALSO PRESENT AT THE GATHERING WERE AGRICULTURE MINISTER DATUK SERI HAJI SANUSI JUNID AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT RAJA DATUK ARIFFIN RAJA SULAIMAN. -- BERNAMA

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