

B E999 AAE
MAHATHIR-WREST R R R R R R R
BM

88
KUALA LUMPUR, APRIL 30 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD WARNED TONIGHT THAT THE ACTIONS OF SOME FORMER UMNO LEADERS IN TRYING TO WREST POWER +AT ALL COSTS+ WILL ONLY DESTROY MALAY UNITY AND EVENTUALLY LEAD TO THE MALAYS LOSING THEIR POLITICAL POWER.

REFERRING TO THE INTENSIVE CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT THE GOVERNMENT CURRENTLY, PARTICULARLY IN KELANTAN, HE SAID IF THIS POLITICAL POWER, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS ONE OF THE STRENGTHS STILL IN THE HANDS OF THE MALAYS, WAS GONE, EVERYONE WOULD FEEL THE LOSS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WHO IS UMNO (BARU) PRESIDENT ISSUED THE WARNING WHEN ADDRESSING A MEETING WITH INFORMATION MINISTRY OFFICERS AS WELL AS OFFICERS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES UNDER THE MINISTRY HERE.

ABOUT 1,500 PEOPLE INCLUDING INFORMATION HEADS OF UMNO BARU DIVISIONS ATTENDED THE MEETING.

OTHERS PRESENT INCLUDED DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER GHAFAR BABA, INFORMATION MINISTER DATUK MOHAMAD RAHMAT AND SEVERAL OTHER CABINET MINISTERS. -- MORE
2239MST 30 04 88

B E002 AAE
MAHATHIR-WREST 2 KUALA LUMPUR R R R R R R R

THE PRIME MINISTER STRESSED THAT THE STRENGTH OF THE MALAYS ALL THIS WHILE LAY IN THEIR UNITY UNDER UMNO.

WITH THIS UNITY, UMNO HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN MANY ELECTIONS.

+HOWEVER IF THIS UNITY IS GONE AND MALAYS ARE DIVIDED, WE WILL LOSE IN THE ELECTION. AND IF THIS HAPPENS, NO ONE WILL GAIN,+ HE STRESSED.

HE REITERATED HIS STATEMENT THAT THE CURRENT DISUNITY AMONG FORMER UMNO MEMBERS HAD RESULTED FROM THE OBSESSION TO GRAB POWER WITHOUT THINKING OF THE INTERESTS OF THE PARTY, RACE AND COUNTRY.

THE HABIT OF CHALLENGING DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED LEADERS ON GROUNDS OF EXERCISING DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES, HE SAID, WAS THE MAIN CAUSE OF THE DISUNITY.

+IN THE PAST, THERE HAD BEEN NO ACTS OF CHALLENGING THE LEADERS. UMNO MEMBERS RESPECTED THE DECISION OF THE MAJORITY AND MADE MALAY UNITY THEIR OVERRIDING CONCERN,+ HE ADDED.

ACCORDING TO HIM, SOME OF THE LEADERS OF THE PAST EVEN HAD TO BE PERSUADED TO STAND FOR ELECTION.

THE BREAK FROM TRADITION STARTED WHEN KEY POSTS IN THE PARTY SUCH AS THE VICE-PRESIDENT POST WERE CONTESTED. -- MORE
2314MST 30 04 88

B E004 AAE
MAHATHIR-WREST 3 KUALA LUMPUR R R R R R R

HE SAID THE +COMPETITION+ TO SECURE INFLUENCE AND THUS AFFECT PARTY UNITY FIRST MANIFESTED ITSELF IN THE CONTEST FOR THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT'S POST IN 1981.

HOWEVER, AT THAT TIME, NO ONE HAD BEEN SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED FOR THE POST AND THE CONTEST MIGHT HAVE BEEN A WAY OUT (DETERMINING WHO SHOULD GET THE POST).

+BUT IN 1984, THERE WAS ALREADY A DEPUTY PRESIDENT ELECTED DEMOCRATICALLY BY THE MAJORITY AND A CONTEST FOR THIS POST WAS NOT NECESSARY,+ HE SAID.

HOWEVER, THE FORMER LEADER CONCERNED HAD FROM EARLY ON SHOWED HIS ATTITUDE OF NOT RESPECTING THE MAJORITY WILL.

+BUT WE ARE NOT DESPOTIC PEOPLE. WE CONTINUED TO RETAIN HIM IN THE CABINET.

+AND HIS PENCHANT FOR CHALLENGING LEADERS SURFACED AGAIN IN THE 1987 PARTY ELECTIONS WHEN HE MADE A BID FOR THE PARTY PRESIDENCY.

+BECAUSE THIS INVOLVED ME, I WAS PLACED IN A DIFFICULT POSITION,+ HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD AN INKLING OF THE ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH A CHALLENGE LONG BEFORE THE CONTEST. -- MORE

2334MST 30 04 88

B E005 AAE
MAHATHIR-WREST 4 KUALA LUMPUR R R R R R R

WITH THE CONTEST, TWO POINTS OF POLARITY EMERGED IN UMNO AND THE MEMBERS GRAVITATED TO THE RESPECTIVE POLARITIES.

AS A RESULT, THE CRACK IN THE PARTY GOT BIGGER.

HE SAID THE ACT OF NOT WANTING TO ACCEPT THE MAJORITY DECISION WAS PERPETUATED THROUGH VARIOUS MEANS INCLUDING RESORTING TO THE COURT, WHEREAS IF DEMOCRACY WAS REALLY RESPECTED, THIS SITUATION WOULD NOT HAVE COME ABOUT BECAUSE DEMOCRACY RECOGNISED THAT A WIN REMAINED A WIN, EVEN IF BY ONE VOTE.

IN HIS SPEECH, THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO COMMENTED ON THE STATEMENT BY FORMER TRADE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER TENGGU RAZALEIGH HAMZAH RECENTLY THAT HE (MAHATHIR) HAD ALLEGEDLY NOT BEEN +GENTLE+ IN DROPPING SEVERAL PEOPLE FROM THE CABINET DESPITE THEIR BEING ELECTED TO THE UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THEIR REMOVAL WAS NOT BECAUSE THEY SUPPORTED TENGGU RAZALEIGH, AS HAD BEEN ALLEGED.

+THESE PEOPLE HAD OPENLY DECLARED THEIR LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY PRESIDENT DURING THE CAMPAIGNING FOR THE PARTY POLLS. THEY HAD ALSO SAID THEY DID NOT AGREE WITH THE POLICIES OF THE GOVERNMENT AND, IN THE PROCESS, HAD LEAKED SEVERAL CABINET SECRETS.+

+HOW CAN WE KEEP SUCH PEOPLE?+ HE ASKED. -- BERNAMA
2348MST 30 04 88