

No split in

S 9 OCT 1988

Barisan,

says Mahathir

Trip Overseas

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today dismissed talk that there is a split among the partners of the Barisan Nasional.

The Prime Minister said Barisan component leaders remained united even though there were some problems.

"There is no proof of this (split). Barisan leaders are united, as demonstrated by their presence at this gathering.

"It's true that we have some problems among us. No group consisting of many races is without any problem," he said when addressing a crowd of several thousand, including Barisan leaders and supporters, who were at the airport to welcome him home.

Dr Mahathir, who is Barisan chairman, added: "What is more important is that we are able to solve these problems through discussions."

He also said it was most important that Barisan leaders did not disregard the promises made to the people.

"They had made a pledge that they would contest as Barisan Nasional candidates and continue to support the party," he said.

Dr Mahathir also dismissed talk by certain quarters that if the leader of one Barisan component party was "ignored," the others in that party would "fall."

"There is an attempt to paint a bad picture of and discredit certain leaders.

"I believe we can defend this Government and the sovereignty of the country."

On leaders who had left the Barisan, Dr Mahathir said they had failed to fulfil the promise made when they were elected.

"The MPs and State Assemblymen were elected on the promise that they would be Barisan leaders and continue to support the coalition.

"If the representatives do not hold on to this promise, the country will suffer dire consequences."

He said they should continue to back the Government and should not, because of personal matters "which were not included in their promises," leave the Barisan.

"When we make a pledge to the people, we must uphold it. If we were to put this pledge aside, the people would no longer trust us... then the Government would be unstable."

He said if MPs and State Assemblymen could not uphold their promises, "they should quit politics entirely."

"MPs are chosen not because they desire the post, but because the people want representatives who are honest."

He said if the people had wanted to vote for the Opposition, they would have done so at the last general election.

"They believed in and supported one party. The elected representatives were given support be-

cause they were Barisan candidates, not because of personalities," he added.

Earlier on arrival, Dr Mahathir and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah were greeted by Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ghafar Baba, Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat and Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Muhammad Haji Muhammad Taib.

He was then driven to Terminal Two, where he was welcomed to the sounds of the *kompa'ng*, a lion dance and the Indian flute.

Also there to greet him were MCA deputy president Lee Kim Sai, deputy MIC president Datuk S. Subramaniam and Gerakan president Datuk Dr Lim Keng Yaik.

After a welcoming speech by the Selangor Menteri Besar, Dr Mahathir addressed the crowd and thanked them for their welcome.

Dr Mahathir was also presented with a souvenir by Datuk Muhammad Taib, chairman of the welcoming committee.

The Prime Minister left on Sept 17 on a tour that took him to West Germany, Belgium, London, New York and Tokyo.

He addressed the UN General Assembly and met businessmen, politicians and senior journalists to explain investment prospects in Malaysia.

En route home, he stopped in Tokyo for trade talks with Japanese Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita.