

MAHATHIR-ELECTION

BM

SUBANG, MARCH 1<sup>90</sup> (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY DESCRIBED THE SETTING UP OF THE GROUP CALLING ITSELF ELECTION WATCH AS A +POLITICAL GIMMICK+ AND AN EXTENSION OF THE OPPOSITION.

+IT'S A POLITICAL GIMMICK... IT'S AN EXTENSION OF THE OPPOSITION, AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED,+ HE TOLD REPORTERS AT THE KUALA LUMPUR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON HIS RETURN FROM LUSAKA, ZAMBIA WHERE HE MET BLACK LEADER NELSON MANDELA.

ELECTION WATCH, FORMED RECENTLY, IS HEAD BY FORMER LORD PRESIDENT TUN MOHAMAD SUFFIAN HASHIM. THE OTHER MEMBERS ARE FORMER AUDITOR GENERAL TAN SRI AHMAD NOORDIN ZAKARIA, FORMER BAR COUNCIL CHAIRMEN RAJA AZIZ ADDRUSE AND DATUK PARAM CUMARASWAMY, ALIRAN PRESIDENT DR CHANDRA MUZAFFAR AND LAWYER CHOOI MUN SOU.

THE GROUP SAID IT WANTED TO ENSURE THAT THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION WOULD BE +FREE AND FAIR.+

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WAS AWARE THAT THE GROUP ALWAYS DISCREDITED THE GOVERNMENT, SMEARED THE COUNTRY OVERSEAS AND ENSURED THAT FOREIGN INVESTORS DID NOT COME TO MALAYSIA ALLEGEDLY BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT WAS UNFAIR AND THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM WAS NOT GOOD. -- MORE

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STRESSING THAT THE GROUP WAS NOT NEUTRAL BUT ANTI-GOVERNMENT, HE SAID EVEN THOUGH ONE OF ITS MEMBERS WAS A FORMER JUDGE, IT DID NOT MEAN HE WAS NOT BIAS.

+THEY CANNOT DO ANYTHING IN THIS COUNTRY. THEY KNOW THEY HAVE LINKS WITH CERTAIN BODIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, AND THEIR WORK AS FAR AS I KNOW OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS IS TO, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, DISCREDIT THE GOVERNMENT AND SMEAR THE COUNTRY. THEY HAVE NO GOOD INTENTION,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE GROUP AS THE COUNTRY PRACTISED FREEDOM.

HE SAID IT WAS UP TO THE PEOPLE WHETHER TO BELIEVE A GROUP WHICH DISCREDITED ITS OWN COUNTRY OR TO HAVE DEVELOPMENT.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO SLAMMED THE BAR COUNCIL WHICH HE SAID DISCREDITED THE GOVERNMENT AMONG LAWYERS WORLDWIDE AND DID NOT CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO THE COUNTRY. -- MORE  
1811MST 01 03 90

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HE SAID IF IT WAS TRUE THAT THERE WAS NO JUSTICE IN MALAYSIA, THEN SURELY MANY PEOPLE WOULD BE OPPRESSED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GROUP COULD REGISTER ITSELF IF IT COMPLIED WITH THE LAWS.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, THE GROUP SEEMED MORE WELL VERSED WITH THE LAWS AND IT COULD DO ANYTHING, INCLUDING FINDING LOOPHOLES IN THE LAWS.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO QUESTIONED THE CALL BY THE GROUP TO RESPECT THE COURTS AND JUDGES, SAYING IT WAS THE ONE WHICH WANTED TO IMPRISON THE LORD PRESIDENT.

+WHEN WE TOOK ACTION AGAINST THE LORD PRESIDENT PREVIOUSLY, WE CLOSELY ADHERED TO THE LAWS. BUT THERE ARE NO PROVISIONS IN THE LAW TO IMPRISON THE LORD PRESIDENT ALLEGEDLY FOR CONTEMPT OF COURT,+ HE SAID.

+PEOPLE LIKE THESE HAVE A PERCEPTION THAT THEY HAVE POWER AND ONCE THEY HAVE POWER THEY MISUSE THEIR POWER. GOD HELP US IF THESE WILL EVER BECOME GOVERNMENT. THEY WILL MISUSE POWER MORE THAN ANYBODY ELSE,+ HE SAID. -- MORE  
1910MST 01 03 90

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ON THE APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR OF INTERNAL SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER DATUK MOHAMED YASSIN JAAFAR AS THE NEW DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF PRISONS, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS ALSO HOME MINISTER, SAID THE APPOINTMENT WAS ONLY AN AD HOC MEASURE.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT FIX A TIME FRAME FOR THE APPOINTMENT, WHICH WAS AIMED AT STREAMLINING THE PRISON ADMINISTRATION, INCLUDING RECTIFYING WHATEVER WEAKNESSES.

HE SAID THE APPOINTMENT OF A SENIOR POLICE OFFICER TO THE POST WAS TO INSTIL POLICE ADMINISTRATION VALUES, WHICH WERE NORMALLY BASED ON STRICT DISCIPLINE, INTO THE PRISON SYSTEM.

A POLICE AND NOT A MILITARY OFFICER WAS CHOSEN BECAUSE THE POLICE WERE MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE ON CIVIL LAWS, HE SAID.

ASKED WHY FOR THE FIRST TIME AN +OUTSIDER+ WAS CHOSEN TO HOLD THE POST, HE SAID: +OUTSIDERS MAY BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY A PROBLEM MORE CLOSELY AND CAN IMPART NEW IDEAS.+

HE SAID THE DECISION TO CHOOSE AN OFFICER FROM A DIFFERENT DEPARTMENT DID NOT CONFLICT WITH THE NEEDS OF THE CIVIL SERVICE.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WAS GLAD THAT THE APPOINTMENT OF DATUK MOHAMED YASSIN WAS WELL ACCEPTED BY THE PRISON OFFICERS. --

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