

GSP: GOVT WILL NOT BE DICTATED, SAYS MAHATHIR

S 26 JUN 1990

ARAU, Mon. — Malaysia will not bow to any pressure from the United States over the GSP issue, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said the country's labour laws were solely the Government's prerogative and no other country "can dictate terms to us."

He said Malaysia would not suffer the fate of South Korea and Taiwan, whose economies he said had been jeopardised by "American intervention."

"We will never allow a third party to twist our arms concerning the GSP. If we do, then our status as an independent nation

will be meaningless.

"It is now up to our workers whether they will allow themselves to be made use of by irresponsible people like (MTUC president) Zainal Rampak, (secretary-general) V. David and (Parti Semangat 46," he told reporters after addressing some 3,500 Umno members at the Arau Vocational School today.

Also present were Menteri Besar Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Pawanteh, State Exco members and state government officials.

Dr Mahathir accused the AFL-CIO of trying to disrupt the country's economy.

"They want to make our goods uncompetitive in the international market so that their goods will find a way into our market. They want to attract all the investments. They want to sell to us, but not us selling to them."

However, the Prime Minister said the US Government was not to blame, adding that trade unions like the AFL-CIO were the "trouble-makers."

Dr Mahathir said that to make matters worse, there were MTUC leaders who were inciting workers to strike to force the Government to give in to their demand for a national electronics union.

He said these leaders did not truly have the interest of the 130,000 electronics workers at heart. "They want to use it (national union) as a political tool. They know the union will be very powerful as there is a lot of money in the industry."

Earlier in his speech, he called on the people not to be taken in by the sweet words of the DAP, PAS and Semangat '46 and reject them completely in the general election.

He said the Barisan Nasional had done much for the people and voters should assess the Government based on its track records.