

U E757 AAE  
MAHATHIR-VISIT (NEWS ANALYSIS)

BM

BY MOKHTAR HUSSAIN

KUALA LUMPUR, JULY 15, (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD WOUND UP HIS TOUR OF UMNO DIVISIONS YESTERDAY, CONVINCED HE HAD ACHIEVED HIS OBJECTIVE OF MAKING THE PEOPLE REALISE THE IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTHENING UNITY TO CONTINUE TO ENJOY PEACE AND PROGRESS UNDER THE BARISAN NASIONAL.

THE BN CHAIRMAN AND UMNO PRESIDENT TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY OF HIS VISIT, WHICH BEGAN IN KAMPUNG KERINCHI HERE ON JUNE 17 AND ENDED IN KULIM, KEDAH, TO EXPLAIN TO THE PEOPLE SEVERAL ISSUES WHICH INVOLVED THEM DIRECTLY.

HE DID NOT BEAT ABOUT THE BUSH. HE ASKED THE PEOPLE TO ENSURE A FUTURE FOR THEMSELVES BY SUPPORTING A LEADERSHIP WHICH WAS TRULY COMMITTED TO HELPING THEM.

+I UNDERSTAND WHAT THE PRIME MINISTER MEANS AND I HOPE ALL OTHER MALAYSIANS ALSO GET THE MESSAGE,+ SAID A RESIDENT IN PASIR MAS, KELANTAN, WHEN ASKED HIS OPINION OF DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR'S SPEECHES WHICH HAD UNITY AND DEVELOPMENT AS THE THEME.

WHAT ATTRACTED THIS RESIDENT'S ATTENTION WAS THE STRAIGHT-TALKING STYLE OF THE PRIME MINISTER WHICH ENABLED THE PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND HIM EASILY. -- MORE

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THIS WAS ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE OTHERS WHO FOLLOWED HIS SPEECHES THROUGHOUT THE TOUR, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAD LISTENED TO HIM SPEAK BEFORE.

MANY OF THEM BELIEVE THAT HIS VISIT THIS TIME IS LINKED TO THE GENERAL ELECTION WHICH THEY EXPECT TO BE HELD SOON.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HIMSELF WAS AWARE OF THE ENTHUSIASM AMONG THE PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY THE OPPOSITION, FOR AN ELECTION.

IN A LIGHTER VEIN, HE SAID: +THE ELECTION IS NEARING. FOR EVERY DAY THAT PASSES, THE ELECTION IS NEARER BY ONE DAY . . . .+

THOSE WHO HAD CLOSELY FOLLOWED THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT SAID HIS MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE WAS CLEAR: THEY HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO CHOOSE THE BARISAN NASIONAL IF THEY WANT A PEACEFUL AND PROSPEROUS LIFE.

POLITICAL OBSERVERS SAID THE ONE-MONTH VISIT WAS VERY EFFECTIVE AS THE PRIME MINISTER SEEMED TO HAVE SUCCEEDED IN DRIVING HOME THE MESSAGE.

SOME FELT THAT WITH DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR GOING ON ANOTHER TOUR OF THE COUNTRY, THE BN WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM ACHIEVING A LANDSLIDE VICTORY IN THE ELECTION. -- MORE

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MAHATHIR-VISIT 3 KUALA LUMPUR (NEWS ANALYSIS)

THE CRUX OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE WAS THAT THE BN GOVERNMENT NEEDED TO IMPROVE ON ITS TWO-THIRD MAJORITY SO THAT IT WOULD BE ABLE TO STEER THE COUNTRY TO GREATER PROGRESS, TO THE LEVEL ACHIEVED BY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES.

HE SAID THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED BY MALAYSIA SO FAR WAS VERY EVIDENT AND THAT THIS LEVEL OF PROGRESS WAS BEHIND ONLY THAT OF THE NEWLY INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES, SOUTH KOREA, HONG KONG, TAIWAN AND SINGAPORE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THERE WAS NO WAY THE PEOPLE COULD BE DENIED THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE TO PROGRESS, ESPECIALLY WHEN ALL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES WERE BEING IMPLEMENTED EFFICIENTLY.

THE MOVE BY THE OPPOSITION TO MANIPULATE THE GENERALISED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES (GSP) ISSUE FOR ITS OWN BENEFIT ALSO BACKFIRED WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER GAVE A DETAILED EXPLANATION ON THE MATTER TO THE PEOPLE.

HE SAID GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES WHICH CAMPAIGNED FOR THE REMOVAL OF MALAYSIA FROM THE GSP LIST HAD ACTUALLY WANTED TO PROTECT THEIR OWN WORKERS WHO FEARED LOSING THEIR JOBS. -- MORE  
1720MST 15 07 90

MAHATHIR-VISIT 4 KUALA LUMPUR (NEWS ANALYSIS)

HE DESCRIBED THE ACTION BY LOCAL TRADE UNIONS TO CONNIVE WITH THESE FOREIGN GROUPS AS DAMAGING TO THE LIVELIHOOD OF MALAYSIAN WORKERS.

SO EFFECTIVE WAS HIS EXPLANATION THAT THE OPPOSITION CHANGED ITS STAND AND EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO DEFEND THE GSP STATUS.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE OPPOSITION NOT ONLY FAILED TO INSTIL IN WORKERS A FEELING OF HATRED AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT BUT ALSO EXPOSED ITS (THE OPPOSITION'S) TRUE COLOURS TO THE PEOPLE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR CONCENTRATED HIS VISIT ON RURAL AREAS, WHERE HE WAS ABLE TO MEET THE PEOPLE AT THE GRASSROOT LEVEL.

SOME OF THESE AREAS WERE ALSO REGARDED AS STRONGHOLDS OF THE OPPOSITION, ESPECIALLY PARTI SEMANGAT 46. -- MORE  
1803MST 15 07 90

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MAHATHIR-VISIT 5 KUALA LUMPUR (NEWS ANALYSIS)

IT WAS EVIDENT THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WENT ALL OUT TO MAKE SURE THAT THE OPPOSITION, ESPECIALLY SEMANGAT 46, DID NOT HAVE ANY CHANCE OF WINNING OVER THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE.

IN FACT, OBSERVERS SAID, HE WANTED THE PEOPLE TO ENSURE THAT THE PARTY WENT INTO OBLIVION AFTER THE POLLS.

HE ALSO EXPLAINED HOW SEVERAL LEADERS IN THAT PARTY HAD BEEN VERY PARTICULAR ABOUT POSTS WHEN THEY WERE IN UMNO.

IF THEY HAD GIVEN PRIORITY TO THE PARTY, THEY WOULD HAVE REMAINED IN UMNO AFTER BEING DEFEATED IN THE PARTY POLLS IN 1987 AND NOT LEAVE THE PARTY AND DRAG IT TO COURT, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HOWEVER REMINDED UMNO MEMBERS TO BE WARY OF EFFORTS BY THIS GROUP TO EXPLOIT THOSE WHO WERE UNABLE TO ACHIEVE THEIR POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS. -- MORE  
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MAHATHIR-VISIT 6 KUALA LUMPUR (NEWS ANALYSIS)

WHILE NOTING THAT SEMANGAT 46 LEADERS STILL RECEIVED THE SYMPATHY OF THE PEOPLE, HE SAID: +CHOOSING ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES JUST BECAUSE YOU LIKE THEM WILL BE DISASTROUS IF THEY ARE UNABLE TO BRING ABOUT DEVELOPMENT.+

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO QUESTIONED THE PAS-DAP COOPERATION, SAYING THAT PAS, WHICH HAD CLAIMED TO BE A CHAMPION OF ISLAM, WAS WILLING TO COOPERATE WITH A PARTY THAT WAS OPPOSED TO PAS' OBJECTIVE OF MAKING MALAYSIA AN ISLAMIC STATE.

HE SAID UMNO, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD ALWAYS GIVEN PRIORITY TO ISLAM.

ON THE OPPOSITION'S PLAN TO HAVE A COALITION GOVERNMENT IF ELECTED TO POWER, HE SAID SUCH A COALITION WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO RULE THE COUNTRY EFFECTIVELY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IT MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR SEMANGAT 46 PRESIDENT TENGKU RAZALEIGH HAMZAH TO LOOK AFTER THE INTEREST OF THE OTHER PARTNERS, ESPECIALLY DAP AND PAS WHICH HAD CONFLICTING PRINCIPLES OF STRUGGLE. -- MORE

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THE PRIME MINISTER ADVISED UMNO MEMBERS TO ORGANISE THEMSELVES EFFECTIVELY TO FACE THE POLLS.

A LARGE MEMBERSHIP AND FIGHTING SPIRIT WOULD NOT BE ADEQUATE IF THERE WAS NO EFFECTIVE STRATEGY, HE SAID.

OBSERVERS SAID DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, AS THE UMNO PRESIDENT, HAD ACCOMPLISHED HIS FIRST TASK OF FACING THE ELECTION.

IN OTHER WORDS, UMNO, AS THE BACKBONE OF THE BARISAN NASIONAL, WAS PREPARED FOR THE BIG DATE, THEY SAID.

NOW, THEY ADDED, THE OTHER BN COMPONENT PARTIES SHOULD OIL THEIR CAMPAIGN MACHINERY, ESPECIALLY THE MCA WHICH WAS EMBROILED IN A LEADERSHIP CRISIS.

HOWEVER, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, AS BN CHAIRMAN, HAS ALREADY EMBARKED ON ANOTHER TOUR, TOGETHER WITH THE LEADERS OF THE OTHER COMPONENT PARTIES.

HIS MESSAGE THIS TIME WILL BE MORE COMPREHENSIVE, ASKING THE PEOPLE, IRRESPECTIVE OF RACE, TO STAND SOLIDLY BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT FOR A MORE PROSPEROUS FUTURE. -- BERNAMA

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