

D108

R E079 AAE
MAHATHIR-RAZALEIGH
BM

KOTA BAHARU, SEPT 29 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THAT HE WAS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RISE OF TENGKU RAZALEIGH HAMZAH IN UMNO.

+I SUPPORTED HIM UNTIL HE SECURED A GOOD POSITION IN UMNO AND I'M SAD WITH THE PRESENT DEVELOPMENT... I HAVE HELPED HIM A LOT,+ HE TOLD A GROUP OF KELANTAN UMNO VETERANS HERE.

THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS THEIR CONTEMPORARY, SAID TENGKU RAZALEIGH ROSE TO BECOME A MINISTER +ON OUR SHOULDERS+ AND BECAUSE OF UMNO.

HE ADDED THAT TENGKU RAZALEIGH FORMED SEMANGAT 46 NOT BECAUSE OF DIFFERENCES IN THE IDEOLOGY AND STRUGGLE BUT BECAUSE HE FAILED IN HIS AMBITION TO BECOME UMNO PRESIDENT OR, RATHER, THE PRIME MINISTER.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR RECALLED THE UMNO ELCTIONS IN 1972 WHEN HE SECURED THE HIGHEST VOTES IN THE CONTEST FOR A SUPREME COUNCIL SEAT.

+BY RIGHT, THE MEMBER WITH THE HIGHEST VOTE IS CONSIDERED THE MOST SENIOR IN THE PARTY AFTER THE VICE-PRESIDENTS, DEPUTY PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT,+ HE SAID.

AS SUCH, HE SHOULD BE THE ONE IN LINE FOR A VICE-PRESIDENT'S POST SHOULD THERE BE ANY VACANCY, HE ADDED. -- MORE
1553MST 29 09 90

R E080 AAE
MAHATHIR-RAZALEIGH 2 KOTA BAHARU

HE SAID WHEN THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT, TUN DR ISMAIL ABDUL RAHMAN, PASSED AWAY, THE LATE TUN HUSSEIN ONN, WHO WAS THEN VICE-PRESIDENT, WAS APPOINTED ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT.

AT THAT TIME, TENGKU RAZALEIGH ASKED HIM TO PROPOSE HIM (TENGKU RAZALEIGH) FOR THE POST OF VICE-PRESIDENT ALTHOUGH TUN HUSSEIN WAS STILL HOLDING THE POST, HE ADDED.

+ALTHOUGH I WAS AWARE THAT I WAS THE MOST SENIOR SUPREME COUNCIL MEMBER AT THAT TIME, I AGREED AND PROPOSED HIM TO REPLACE TUN HUSSEIN AND THERE WAS NO OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSAL,+ HE SAID.

+SO, DON'T SAY THAT I DIDN'T HELP...+ HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID, HOWEVER, WHEN HE CONTESTED FOR A VICE-PRESIDENT'S POST LATER, TENGKU RAZALEIGH DIRECTED KELANTAN UMNO NOT TO SUPPORT HIM.

+THAT'S NOT FAIR... I'M THE MOST SENIOR AND VETERAN... HOW CAN HE SAY THAT HE WAS IN THE PARTY MUCH EARLIER?+ HE ADDED.

IN FACT, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID, WHEN HE WAS STRUGGLING FOR KEDAH UMNO, TENGKU RAZALEIGH WAS ABOUT 10 YEARS OLD.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HE WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT WHATEVER EFFORT BY TENGKU RAZALEIGH TO OPPOSE HIM BUT HE WAS NOT PREPARED TO SEE UMNO DESTROYED BY SUCH ACTIONS. -- MORE

1606MST 29 09 90

R E085 AAE
MAHATHIR-RAZALEIGH 3 KOTA BAHARU

HE SAID, HAD HE LOST IN THE LEADERSHIP CONTEST IN 1987, UMNO WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN DRAWN TO COURT AND DECLARED ILLEGAL AND SEMANGAT 46 WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED.

+HE DID ALL THIS BECAUSE HE LOST... NOT BECAUSE OF THE ECONOMY OR SUCH LIKE,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID TENGKU RAZALEIGH SHOULD NOT HAVE TRIED TO SPLIT THE UNITY OF THE MALAYS, WHICH EXISTED FOR SO LONG THROUGH UMNO'S STRUGGLE, ESPECIALLY WHEN HE HIMSELF WAS IN UMNO BEFORE.

+I MYSELF TRIED TO AVOID THIS... UNTIL I OFFERED HIM A CABINET POST,+ HE ADDED.

HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD TENGKU RAZALEIGH'S ASPIRATION TO BE UMNO PRESIDENT BUT HE SHOULD NOT HAVE WEAKENED THE UNITY OF THE MALAYS WHEN HIS EFFORTS FAILED.

+DATUK MUSA HITAM ALSO HAD A SIMILAR ASPIRATION... BUT HE WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT DEFEAT... AND IF I HAD LOST, I TOO WOULD HAVE ACCEPTED DEFEAT...+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID TENGKU RAZALEIGH'S ACTION IN BEFRIENDING THE DAP, UMNO'S MAIN ENEMY, WOULD NOT DO ANY GOOD FOR THE MALAYS.

HE ASKED THE UMNO VETERANS TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT UMNO AS +OUR STRUGGLE HAS NOT ENDED... AND WE SHOULD NOT STOP HERE.+

HE SAID THEY SHOULD NOT LET ANYONE DESTROY THE UNITY OF THE MALAYS. -- MORE

1618MST 29 09 90

R E090 AAE
MAHATHIR-RAZALEIGH 4 KOTA BAHARU

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR'S EXPLANATION WAS WELL RECEIVED BY THE PEOPLE.

HE ALSO ASKED FOR THE COOPERATION OF THE VETERANS IN EFFORTS TO REGAIN UMNO'S ASSETS.

HE SAID AT PRESENT UMNO HAD TO PAY RENT FOR USING ITS OWN BUILDING, THE UMNO HEADQUARTERS IN KUALA LUMPUR, WHICH IT HAD YET TO REGAINED, AFTER UMNO WAS DECLARED ILLEGAL.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF UNITY AMONG UMNO MEMBERS TO AVOID A FURTHER SPLIT AMONG THE MALAYS AS A RESULT OF SEMANGAT 46 AND PAS ACTIONS.

HE SAID WITHOUT UNITY, THE MALAYS COULD NOT PROGRESS AND THIS WOULD RETARD THEIR DEVELOPMENT.

FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID, THE WEST ASIAN COUNTRIES HAD ALL THE POTENTIAL TO PROGRESS AND YET THEY WERE WEAK BECAUSE THERE WAS NO UNITY AMONG THEM. -- BERNAMA

1638MST 29 09 90