

MAHATHIR-THORN

BM

KUANTAN, OCT 17, (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD, DESCRIBING PARTI BERSATU SABAH (PBS)'S PRESENCE IN THE BARISAN NASIONAL (BN) AS +A THORN IN ONE'S FLESH+, SAID DATUK SERI JOSEPH PAIRIN KITINGAN SEEMED TO BE AT TIMES UNAWARE THAT HE WAS IN MALAYSIA.

+WHILE THE PBS IN THE BN, WE FOUND OUT THAT HE LACKED BN'S SPIRIT. AS A MATTER OF FACT, HE SEEMED UNAWARE THAT HE'S IN MALAYSIA.... HE ONLY TALKED ABOUT SABAH, SABAH, SABAH,+ THE PRIME MINISTER SAID.

HE SAID EVEN THE TELEVISION COMMERCIAL ON SABAH CONTAINED THE SLOGAN +SABAH WILL SHOW THE WAY+.

+THEREFORE, AT TIMES WE FEEL DIFFICULT TO BE TOGETHER WITH THEM BECAUSE THEY DO NOT SEEM TO CONSIDER THEMSELVES AS MALAYSIANS AT ALL BUT MERELY SABAHANS...MADE ALL SORTS OF DEMAND THAT WERE DIFFICULT TO ENTERTAIN.

+NOW THAT THEY HAVE LEFT THE BN, WE FEEL A LITTLE BIT AT EASE. THERE'S NO MORE PEOPLE CAUSING US PROBLEM,+ HE TOLD REPORTERS AFTER A CLOSED DOOR MEETING WITH BN CANDIDATES IN THE STATE AT UMNO BUILDING HERE. -- MORE.

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HAD EARLIER, IN A MEETING WITH SOME 500 GOVERNMENT STAFF AT THE KUANTAN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL (MPK), DESCRIBED PBS'S PRESENCE IN THE BN AS +A THORN IN ONE'S FLESH.+

HE ALSO SAID THE PBS HAD ALL THIS WHILE CAUSED +THE FLESH TO SWELL AND SUPPURATE+ AND NOW THAT IT HAD PULLED OUT OF THE BN, THE +DAMAGED FLESH HAD RUPTURED AND THE BN HAD OVERCOME THE FEVER.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR TOLD REPORTERS, THE BN HAD NOW DECIDED TO SUPPORT INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES OR THOSE FROM AKAR WHO WERE CONTESTING AGAINST THE PBS IN THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION IN SABAH.

+NONE OF THE INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES HAVE APPROACHED US AS YET BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER WE'LL LOOK FOR THEM. OUR PURPOSE IS TO DEFEAT PBS CANDIDATES,+ HE SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WAS ALSO ASKED TO COMMENT ON CLAIM BY CERTAIN QUARTERS THAT THE DECISION TO SET UP UMNO BRANCHES IN SABAH WAS MADE IN HASTE OR AS A POLITICAL GIMMICK.-- MORE.

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HE SAID ACTUALLY A REQUEST HAD BEEN MADE LONG TIME AGO TO SET UP UMNO IN SABAH BUT IT WAS REJECTED THEN.

+WE ADMIT UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WE HAVE TO MAKE A DECISION FAST BECAUSE WE HAVE ONLY A FEW MORE DAYS TO GO. IF WE ARE TO STUDY IT, IT WILL TAKE TIME. BY THEN THE EFFECT, IN TERMS OF POLITICS, WILL BE GONE,+ HE SAID.

ON FEDERAL TERRITORY OF LABUAN WHICH DATUK PAIRIN CLAIMED WOULD BE RETURNED TO SABAH, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE PBS PRESIDENT COULD SAY AS HE LIKED TO THE SABAHANS IN HIS ATTEMPT TO GAIN THEIR VOTES.

ASKED ON BN PERFORMANCES IN THE ELECTION FOLLOWING PBS'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE BN, HE SAID BN COULD WIN AND IT ONLY NEEDED 120 PARLIAMENTARY SEATS TO OBTAIN A TWO-THIRD MAJORITY IN THE DEWAN RAKYAT. -- BERNAMA.