

People who want to split
the country are traitors

PM: Don't threaten Federation

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By Ahmad A. Talib

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysians who collaborate with outside parties to harm the independence of the country are traitors.

In an obvious reference to the demand for a referendum to decide the future of Sabah by the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) Government, the prime minister said the Government would not allow anybody to split the country.

"We will defend our freedom and rights. Malaysia is an independent country. All matters relating to its formation had been resolved before Malaysia was formed

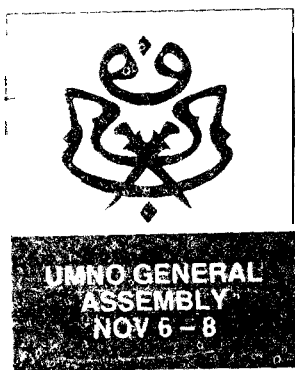
"Whoever tries to work with foreigners to destroy the country's independence is a traitor to the country. Hence, do not play with fire," he said in what is seen as the most strongly-worded warning on the issue.

In his keynote address at the opening of the Umno general assembly, the party president said: "Malaysia is a peaceful country, so let us not threaten it by fuelling factional and territorial sentiments.

"Once rational thinking gives way to emotions, it would be very difficult for those who whip the emotions of the people to calm the situation," he added.

He said influenced by the breakup of many large nations into small countries, were groups in Malaysia that thought the same should be done for the country.

When confronted, they denied that this was their in-



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Attention.

The prime minister asked: "Isn't it a proof that they are attempting to leave Malaysia when they demand a review of the relationship between the State and Federal Governments, call for a referendum and make plans to take over the security role in the State?"

These people, said Dr Mahathir, might be thinking

that foreigners would support their action by claiming that the Federal Government suppressed them because they are Christians.

"All these statements are made to gain sympathy and assistance should they decide to proceed with unlawful acts.

"They believe that we will not take action because we are afraid of their friends abroad. I would like to advise them that their friends, who claim to champion human rights and the freedom of minorities, no longer have the credibility or morality to act," said the prime minister.

They claimed that they had the right to interfere in the affairs of any country on the pretext of protecting the rights of the people.

"But what do we see in Bosnia? Human rights are being blatantly violated and with great cruelty, but the champions of the world have refused to take any effective action. They only say 'don't, don't' when tens of thousands of Muslims and Christian Croats are murdered," said Dr Mahathir.

He added that if the **Berikatan Nasional** could not rule any State in Malaysia, it did not matter as it accepted the democratic decision of the people.

"But let there not be any quarter or any State which tries to undermine the federation that unites States in this country. The responsibility of the Federal Government is clear. It will defend the federation and independence of the country by whatever means," he said to the applause of the audience.