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Razaleigh-Reaction

ANWAR WELCOMES KU LI'S MOVE TO REJOIN UMNO

KUALA LUMPUR, May 9 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today that he supports the move by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah to rejoin Umno for as long as it does not create a faction within the party.

He said that in the interest of the party, Umno members should have an open mind and allow all Malays to join the party.

Anwar, who is Umno deputy president, said that he had been informed earlier of the meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is Umno president, and Tengku Razaleigh.

"I expressed (to the Prime Minister) that I am in favour (of Tengku Razaleigh rejoining Umno) for as long as it does not create a faction within the party. Therefore, for me, it is not a problem," he told reporters after opening the corporate headquarters of Koperasi Usaha Bersatu Malaysia Bhd (KUB) at the Pekleliling Business Centre here.

Dr Mahathir late last night made a surprise announcement that Tengku Razaleigh, a former Umno vice president and now president of the splinter Parti Melayu Semangat 46 (S46), met him last Tuesday night and expressed his intention to rejoin Umno.

Asked whether the move by Tengku Razaleigh will affect his position in the party, Anwar said: "I wouldn't want to sound over-confident, but I think that certainly it is not the issue...the principle that we have held so far is to welcome everybody into the party."

Anwar said that Tengku Razaleigh's move augured well for Malay unity.

However, he does not know whether Tengku Razaleigh would rejoin Umno before or after the party's 50th anniversary celebrations on Saturday. --

In PETALING JAYA, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is Umno Supreme Council member, also welcomed Tengku Razaleigh's move to rejoin the party.

"If he wishes to rejoin (Umno), it is very well indeed and he has also stated that his spirit is still the same Umno spirit," he told reporters after opening the Forum for Junior Asean Diplomats on International Affairs 1996 at the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations.

Abdullah said Umno always had its door open to Malays who accepted its constitution and principles.

"I believe that if his move to rejoin the party is based on this, there will not be any problem," he said adding that the move would strengthen Malay unity if it meant that S46 would no longer exist.

Meanwhile, Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said that he was confident Umno would be able to recapture Kelantan in the next general election with Tengku Razaleigh and other S46 members in Umno.

"In the last general election, the Barisan Nasional secured 46 per cent of the votes while S46 obtained 15 per cent of the votes in Kelantan...based on such statistics, the chances (to recapture Kelantan) are bright," he told reporters after opening the Esso Junior Entrepreneur Programme here.

He called on other S46 members to make a similar move.

Rural Development Minister Datuk Annuar Musa said he was confident that Tengku Razaleigh's move could change the unique political scenario in Kelantan.

"Kelantan's future is bright with the understanding among the leaders and I personally hope that Tengku Razaleigh will rejoin Umno as soon as possible," he told reporters after launching the Baktidesa logo and

witnessing the signing of a memorandum of understanding between companies participating in the Baktidesa programme here.

Annuar, who is deputy chairman of the Kelantan Umno Liaison Committee, hoped that all Umno members would welcome other S46 members who wish to join Umno.

They should never harbour any doubts or suspicion towards them, he added.

Asked on the possibility that Tengku Razaleigh will be given a position in the party, he said it was the prerogative of the Prime Minister.

"I don't think Tengku Razaleigh is after any position...I feel that he is sincere," he added.

In SEREMBAN, Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad said that the move by Tengku Razaleigh to rejoin Umno would not only benefit the people of Kelantan but would also contribute towards improving Malay unity.

"There will now no longer be any Umno splinter party which could in any way threaten Malay unity," he told reporters after the ground-breaking ceremony at the site of a housing project in Senawang.

He said that Umno's strength would be further enhanced because the step taken by Tengku Razaleigh would lead to other S46 members joining Umno.

Mohamed Isa said that the move would indirectly lead the Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah, led by S46 and PAS, to the grave.

Commenting on a S46 leader who has "burnt the bridges behind him", he said that burnt bridges could be rebuilt.

He was apparently referring to Datuk Dr Rais Yatim, who is S46 deputy president.

In KOTA KINABALU, Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Salleh Said Keruak, who is Sabah Umno Liaison chief, said that Tengku Razaleigh's move would further strengthen Umno and Malay unity.

He said that Malay unity was vital especially in facing future challenges as the country moves into the next millennium.

Umno had been proven to be the pillar of the nation which was able to forge ahead to attain development on par with that of developed countries.

Sabah Umno Information chief, Datuk Abdul Karim Ghani said that Tengku Razaleigh's move was a most encouraging development.

It would be even better if members of PAS were to join Umno so that Malay unity could be further enhanced, he added.

Abdul karim said that this was the most suitable time for all Malays and eligible Bumiputeras to join Umno for the sake of the nation's progress.

In Ipoh, Perak Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib said that the move by Tengku Razaleigh to join Umno would boost the political strength of the Malays.

"Umno certainly requires the Malays to be united and S46 members should realise that with more members from the party, the strength of the Malays will be further enhanced and they could forge ahead for further progress," he said in a statement.

Ramli, who is the chairman of the state Umno liaison committee, said that Tengku Razaleigh's move to rejoin Umno added more meaning to the party's 50th anniversary celebrations.

He hoped that Malays in other opposition parties would also join Umno in the interest of the race and religion.

In PULAU PINANG, Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Mohamed Shariff Omar said that Tengku Razaleigh's move was most welcomed to further strengthen Malay unity.

"It should not only be seen as a move to unite the Malays in Kelantan but the unity of the Malays in the country," he said.

In this respect, Shariff said that he would hold a meeting with the S46 leader in the state, Datuk Yusoff Abdul Latiff, to discuss Malay unity in Pulau Pinang.

Yusoff, a member of the party's supreme council, was a former chairman of the state S46 liaison body.

Gerakan President Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said Tengku Razaleigh's return to Umno would be beneficial for the overall political development of Umno and the Barisan Nasional and was also good for the country.

His return from his political limbo had also demonstrated the true colours of PAS, he said.

"It's a good development," he told reporters after a forum on the Seventh Malaysia Plan organised by the party here today.

In MELAKA, Melaka Umno Liaison Committee chief Datuk Seri Mohamed Zin Abdul Ghani said that the move by Tengku Razaleigh to rejoin Umno showed he believed that the political struggle of the Malays could only be achieved through Umno.

He told reporters at his office that Umno would be further strengthened with his return into the party.

Zin, who is Melaka Chief Minister, hoped that S46 members in the state would also join Umno.

He said that he did not expect any power struggle in Umno with Tengku Razaleigh's return adding that it was welcomed news as the party celebrates its 50th anniversary.

In JOHOR BAHRU, the president of the National Rubber Smallholders Association (Nash), Datuk Ahmad Arshad, said that Tengku Razaleigh's return to Umno was a blessing to the party which is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

He told Bernama that the move would strengthen Malay unity especially in Kelantan.

Umno members throughout the country should welcome his return with much sincerity, he added.

Ahmad said that as a token of appreciation, Dr Mahathir should allow Tengku Razaleigh to take over the post of Kelantan Umno Liaison Committee chairman from him. -- BERNAMA