

10 MAY 1996

Razaleigh-Unification

SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOR S46-UMNO UNIFICATION

KUALA LUMPUR, May 10 (Bernama) -- Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah today declared that Parti Melayu Semangat 46 (S46) will establish relations and cooperation as a partner with the ruling party in a move towards unification with Umno.

As a first step, the S46 president and other top party leaders will attend the Umno convention tomorrow in conjunction with Umno's 50th anniversary celebration at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here tomorrow.

At a press conference at his residence at Jalan Langgak Golf, here, Tengku Razaleigh said the formation of a special committee between Umno and S46 had been agreed upon to enhance cooperation in the interest of Malay unity.

"Truly, I accept that the unification of our party with Umno is the best formula towards unifying the Malays. To date, Parti Melayu Semangat 46 has not been dissolved," he said.

S46 deputy president Datuk Rais Yatim, secretary general Datuk Abdul Manan Osman and information chief Ahmad Shabery Chik were among party leaders who attended the press conference.

"I wish to stress that in the interest of Malay unity and the prosperity of the rakyat as a whole in facing the 21st century, we will cooperate with and assist the leadership of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as the Prime Minister of Malaysia," he said.

Questioned on the form of the cooperation, Tengku Razaleigh said S46 would support the actions of the federal government and the state governments under the Barisan Nasional (BN) leadership.

Ahmad Shabery said that as a symbol of support, S46 would not contest in the by-election for the Bukit Asahan State Assembly seat in Melaka on June 3. S46 lost to the BN in the last general election for the Bukit Asahan state seat.

Tengku Razaleigh had met with Dr Mahathir twice during the last six weeks to discuss efforts towards Malay unity including the possibility of his (Tengku Razaleigh's) and all of S46 members' joining Umno.

He reiterated his statement that if all of S46 members agreed to join Umno, they would do so en-bloc.

He said the party's struggles would no longer be used as a weapon for confrontation but instead they would be used as contribution to "friends in the ruling party".

The choice for the Malays, he said, was no longer between the conflicting Malay parties or the personalities leading them.

"On the other hand, the choice for them is between progress and retrogression. Between peace and conflict. Between wisdom and emotional motivation," he said.

Questioned whether the form of cooperation with Umno included the possibility of S46 sitting together with Umno as opposition in the Kelantan state assembly, he said:

"If you want to raise the issue on Kelantan, we are still holding positions in the Kelantan state exco," he said.

Questioned whether the exco posts would be surrendered, he said: "As far as I know, we have not been kicked out yet." -- BERNAMA

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