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Parliament-pass

DEWAN RAKYAT PASSES CONFIDENCE MOTION ON PM UNANIMOUSLY

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 19 (Bernama) -- The Dewan Rakyat tonight unanimously passed a motion of confidence in Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's leadership after debating it for four hours.

It simultaneously passed the tandem motion objecting to a United States' move to investigate investment by Petronas, the national oil corporation, in Iran.

Deputy Speaker Datuk Ong Tee Keat announced the passage of the motion after it was put to vote with no objection.

It was tabled by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

At that juncture no opposition members from the DAP, PAS and PBS were in the House except for Dr Patau Lubis (STAR-Mas Gading).

However, during debate, the PBS, led by Datuk Dr Joseph Pairin Kitingan had supported the motion.

The 192-member Dewan Rakyat is made up of 168 Barisan Nasional representatives and 24 from the opposition.

DAP has nine members and PAS and PBS, seven each and STAR one.

Ong announced that the decision was unanimous based on voice-voting of "ayes".

This was followed by BN members in the House tapping the table signalling consensus in expressing confidence in Dr Mahathir's leadership.

The motion was meant to register Malaysians' objection to the move by 34 US congressmen who demanded that Dr Mahathir openly apologise or resign for his allegedly anti-Jewish statement.

Dr Mahathir had repeatedly clarified that his statement had been misinterpreted and that he is not anti-Jew.

The motion was also in protest against US' attempt to invoke its Iran-Libya Sanctions Act on Petronas for having invested more than US\$20 million in a gas joint-venture project in Iran.

When winding up debate on the motion, Anwar criticised the DAP and PAS for not openly voicing their support for Dr Mahathir.

The DAP, Anwar said, believed more in statements made by the Western media and leaders than Dr Mahathir's clarification that he is not anti-Jew.

"In fact, they accuse us of trying to divert the people's attention from the issues faced by the nation, for example, depreciation of the ringgit. Some also allege that the motion is to trap the opposition into supporting Dr Mahathir," he said.

Anwar lambasted PAS deputy president Haji Abdul Hadi Awang who claimed that Malaysia had an "intra-secret" agreement with the US.

He said he was perplexed by Abdul Hadi's reluctance to support the motion on behalf of the party during debate PAS' adviser and Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat had jointly signed a letter of support with the other menteri besar and chief ministers.

"Therefore I would like to correct the perceptions of the member from Marang (Abdul Hadi) who, as usual, has differing views from that of the party adviser. We thus see such a conflict between the two PAS leaders. One gives his signature as Menteri Besar...I confirm that I see the letter of support and his (Nik Aziz) signature...but another is disputing it. How come there are two sects within a party," said Anwar to the laughter of the House members.

On Abdul Hadi's allegation of the secret agreement, Anwar said : "I don't know where did he dig the agreement from. This is a very unhealthy

political ploy... a game of trying to play with the people's sentiment instead of showing loyalty to the government."

The House sits again tomorrow. -- BERNAMA

TEAM NMO rn