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Abdullah-Mahathir

ABDULLAH REITERATES HIS STRONG SUPPORT FOR DR MAHATHIR

By: E.Sivabalan

DURBAN, South Africa, Sept 3 (Bernama) -- Foreign Minister and Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today telephoned Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad from here to express his strong support for the Prime Minister and for whatever action he has taken to revive the Malaysian economy.

Abdullah said he told Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, that Umno members and the people would understand his decision to remove Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim from the Cabinet.

"I told him that after Umno members and the people understand the reasons for the removal they will be supportive," he told Malaysian reporters here.

Abdullah is representing Dr Mahathir at the 12th summit of the Non-Aligned Movement here. The summit ended today.

Asked whether he discussed Anwar's replacement in the Cabinet, Abdullah said, "I did not ask for the Prime Minister's comments."

"I did not mention anything about replacement. I only said I supported the Prime Minister," he said.

"I hope Umno members will understand Dr Mahathir's action to remove Anwar to preserve political stability and racial unity," he said.

Abdullah also told Dr Mahathir in the phone conversation that the Prime Minister's colleagues in the NAM expressed full support for him in his efforts to revive the economy.

Abdullah also said, "The Prime Minister must have made careful deliberations before arriving at his decision (to remove Anwar from the Cabinet) particularly when it involved someone who was considered as his successor."

From the reactions of State Umno Liaison Committees and other Umno leaders it was clear they understood why action was taken against Anwar.

On Anwar's statement that he had been slandered, Abdullah said Anwar was free to express his views on his removal.

"However he has to have the proof," he added.

--BERNAMA

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