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Dr M: Try to solve problems within supreme council

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A MEMBER of the supreme council advised me at the last supreme council meeting last Thursday night, after the Umno Youth and Wanita meeting, to anatomise the call by the Youth wing.

It is not for me to take this matter lightly because if we do not give enough attention to the matters brought up, it could become serious.

Actually this is our way in the supreme council. The president does not simply give directions like a dictator, but we discuss things in a proper and polite manner and we hear everybody's views and criticisms levelled at everyone, including the president, deputy president and others.

No one is exempted from being criticised. I am often criticised by supreme council members and, if everyone agrees, I am forced to abide by what has been voiced.

This is our way in Umno because Umno is a political party that is quite old - now more than 50 years.

Umno is a proper organisation. It has a constitution, a proper procedure for meetings, has members in branches, divisions, State liaison committees, a supreme council, annual general meetings and special general meeting.

All of this we organised because we want to ensure the workings of the party will bring maximum benefits from our involvement in this organisation.

Ordinary members are given a chance to speak at meetings at the level of branches.

Branch representatives can speak at the division level; the divisional level has a representative at the level of the State liaison and we know that supreme council members are chosen by all of us to carry out their main duties of managing our organisation.

It is most important we accept these bodies and channels as they give us many benefits.

If we do not use the facilities that we designed and created, the running of the party will not bring maximum benefits.

It is not easy to become a supreme council member. We hold elections and some of the elections have been fractious.

We have made the effort to elect members of the supreme council because we consider that to become a supreme council member is not like pinning medals on our chest.

When we become a supreme council member, we have the opportunity to voice the opinions at the next highest level - that is the level in which they can implement things.

That is the purpose of becoming a supreme council member - not a decoration nor a medal or as a way to beat our chest and say, "I am a supreme council member".

We must use the supreme council in the best possible way and with that our party will become very secure and the party will also succeed.

Because of that I am sad whenever the supreme council is not used to discuss matters considered as very serious, very big and threatening to the party and nation.

I do not want to expose anything, but it is important I remind the party on the need to use the party's constitution and instruments provided in the party.

On the questions that have been raised such as nepotism, cronyism,

capitalism, reformation and others, such matters should be brought to the attention of the supreme council.

But as my colleagues must have been aware these are very serious matters which can become a big problem in our nation but were never mentioned in the supreme council.

I myself brought the matter to the attention of the supreme council after reading newspaper reports.

I did not receive a personal report. I read in the newspapers that my criticism on the implementation of several government policies was not transparent.

In a meeting in May, I have clarified how important it is that we do not spread the matter because it will be detrimental to the party and nation and it will be made an issue by the opposition parties against us. It may even be used by our enemies overseas.

Let me reiterate that if there are problems, let us discuss and table the matter and solve it within the supreme council where normally the meetings exclude outsiders.

Why do we disallow the meeting to be held openly? Because if we have an open meeting, it would be more difficult for us to discuss matters that are unpleasant. The supreme council meeting is closed-door and as such members are free to speak openly.

The supreme council is not a mock meeting. We have met from 9pm to 4am without stopping at all because of the important role the supreme council plays.

Whenever we are faced with a problem we concentrate our efforts towards its solution. We give the opportunity to all supreme council members to speak. Not a single person is denied a chance to speak.

If we observe the SC agenda, it is always the same. Most of the time the agenda is the same. The agenda reads like this. First the prayer. This we give to Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad to recite. Second, speech by YAB Datuk Seri chairman. Good, I can speak.

Third, to confirm minutes of the previous meetings and fourthly matters arising.

Fifth, reports by the supreme council management committee where the deputy president has the chance to speak.

After him, chairman of the State Umno liaison committees, where all Menteri Besar speak. After that the Youth movement chief speaks, followed by Wanita movement chief.

After that the bureau chairmen speaks. After that if there are other issues, it is discussed under other matters. All have their place and time in the agenda to speak.

Therefore, there is no question of not being given the chance to speak. Because of that when there is a serious matter that can destroy the party, race and our nation, that is the time we should talk.

And, as in May, the problems that were raised outside the supreme council could have been brought to the attention of the supreme council.

But unfortunately the Youth chief did not say much. He only said that the newspaper report was not accurate.

When we gave the opportunity to make a winding-up speech, he says there is nothing for him to say because he has been under a lot of pressure, he says. Therefore he did not want to talk.

I felt relieved, thinking it was settled but after that, outside, the same matter occurred. Two days later, this matter was mentioned in his speech on June 18.

This means that we are not willing to talk inside but prefer to talk outside.

This has a negative effect on our party. Even though I am president and

seem to sit on a high throne, it does not mean I cannot become close to the supreme council members, especially party leaders.

In fact he was invited to meet me and we met. I thought the problem was finished but it seems that it is still not finished.

I am of the opinion that we are all supreme council members; there is not need to use any "bridges".

If you trust, believe other supreme council members, meet with me because this is our problem. We are party leaders; as the leaders of the party we must take care of the party.

If there is anything that is not right we rectify it. If we go public on this the matter will not be solved and the person accused will feel disappointed, they will feel guilty.

If they do not reply openly, they reply in a closed manner and this will ruin the party.

I request SC members to use the SC. To speak honestly because we all love the party.

Whenever we speak in public, and in more or less the same tone as that of the critics abroad, it will more or less confirm that what is said is true.

Last year at the Umno meeting, who was it that spoke of cronyism and of nepotism, do you remember? No one. Not even a single person. We had not heard of it.

We had not heard because the words then did not exist. They do, but were not used widely by the foreign newspapers and magazines. But today, we hear because they are mentioned often by foreign magazines.

The words were used by certain people of another nation, that is, they were to topple their Government.

Maybe there is basis for them because their nation is different from ours.

Their constitution differs from our constitution. They have political systems and a system of government very different from ours.

In Malaysia, no one can become a Minister unless he is an elected representative of the people.

I have spoken on reformation but the reformation that I mean is not to change our Constitution, but to change the Malay mindset, so that we can form one culture that is stronger in line with the times, and that which can ensure we can become more progressive.

I did not say that we need to reform our political system. Not that our political system does not have shortcomings.

But it is not that serious that we need to press for reformation. Possibly what is meant by the reformation was to eliminate corruption, nepotism and cronyism.

But this is not reformation. We do not accept these as our common practices and we have always condemned all these as sins.

And because of that we have had a special meeting to eliminate money politics within our party. We already know this matter and we rejected it.

If we had rejected it, there is not need for reformation. What is needed is greater seriousness in rejecting the practices of using money. But we talk only but do not do.

Knowing things, we sometimes still send people on trips here and there and to perform the umrah and so on. For what? If we want reformation, these are among the things we should not do.

Allegations of cronyism and nepotism is definitely being used by foreigners to hinder, to ensure the failure of the New Economic Policy. Whenever they see how we do our social engineering, how we can raise the

level of Malays and other Bumiputeras, they find it difficult to criticise.

Because what we do is social engineering, helping the poor so that they live the same as other races in this country.

It is difficult for them to criticise that but they seem to have succeeded when they say those who profit from the NEP are only friends of Umno leaders.

As if each time they mention the person said to be close to the leadership of Umno, it means the NEP will benefit only two or three members of a partnership.

If we don't examine what they say, we may be convinced of their arguments and there are people in Malaysia who are readily willing to be convinced.

Leaders of the socialist party also say, hah, NEP profits a few friends of the leader or Umno party members.

But is it true that the NEP benefits only a few people? Actually NEP is beneficial. If we only take into account Permodalan Malaysia Berhad, six million Malays and Bumiputeras have received profits from NEP.

Are these six million families Umno members? Umno members only total 2.7 million. These six million get shares through PNB. These are PNB shares, not taking into account other shares.

We observe that those who get scholarship from Mara total only 140,000. This not counting scholarships offered by JPA, Petronas, Telekom and others. Is it true the NEP only profits only those who are close to Umno, Umno leaders only?

We observe that to the hardcore poor group we give all sorts of assistance, and we even built homes for them.

I challenge anyone who can prove other nations in the world who have the same programme to care for the people the way we have done.

Have we neglected the middle class? Not necessarily. I myself feel dissatisfied with the small middle class among the Malays and Bumiputeras and we would like to add to their numbers by providing many types of funds.

All the time we are thinking of ways to increase the numbers of middle class. That is why we established the Entrepreneur Development Ministry to increase mid-level entrepreneurs and businessmen and supply them with trade, goods to assist Bumiputeras.

If not enough numbers, we have many ways including the franchise system to give opportunities to our people to get into that class. They are willing. We talk together.

Many times I have directed them to enlarge the middle class because we consider the middle-class as one very important class for the Bumiputera community.

The professional group we increase through the provision of scholarships, by establishing universities, having many types of training. All these we have done.

We do not forget the very poor, of course, but at the same time do we stop only at the level of the middle class?

Definitely not enough because other races have the upper classes. We annual income of RM1 million.

We have come to know that some of our people have not only RM1 or RM2 million but hundreds of million and they can also be classified as middle class.

What is wrong if our people want to become rich? Is it wrong? To me it is not wrong. In fact, I am proud when I see Malays getting rich.

I am happy, they buy airplanes, buy Mercedeses... what is wrong. Our people! Our race!

Once upon a time all of us only swept the streets.

I lived under four colonial rulers. First the British. At that time I was only a child. British had colonised Malaysia. After that the British were defeated by the Japanese.

I lived under the Japanese. The Japanese gave Kedah, Perlis, Terengganu and Kelantan to Siam and thus I was colonised by the Siamese. After that the British came back and under the British Military Administration we were colonised yet again.

I observed how Malays who did not show respect to the Japanese army were forced to carry rocks, hold the rocks over their head because they did not respect and did not obey the Japanese army. They were like alleycats.

Malays were forced to lift rocks and I saw it with my own eyes. I saw how an old Malay man on a bicycle did not stop while the national anthem of Siam was being played. When the song ended, a Siamese soldier kicked him.

I was around during the British Empire. We did not even have a shred of dignity; we were not allowed to do this and that. Almost everything could not do.

That is why when we can, I feel proud. When a Malay can be a surgeon, can perform heart surgery; I preferred that he operate on me because I was confident he could.

As Prime Minister I could have gone abroad and the Government could have paid.

But I did not want that. I wanted a Malay... our own people!