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Foreign power behind 'puppet' may try again: Dr M

THE foreign power that was behind a failed attempt to control the Malaysian Government with the use of a "credible puppet" may try again, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned Umno leaders yesterday.

In a speech that drove hard on the message that the Malays must unite, the Umno president said recolonisation will succeed only if the Malays are divided.

He told of how a foreign power, detecting the seeds of disunity among the Malays, started their search for the credible puppet to achieve its ambition to dominate Malaysia.

"Once they have identified this puppet, they used his weaknesses to control him. They employ many ways to ensure that the puppet comes under their control.

"Thus, special treatment is given to him ... in the end, they hope the puppet can take over the country's leadership and carry out their orders. Indirectly, colonialism would have happened," he said.

But the efforts by the puppet failed and the foreign power became incensed. In its anger, it exposed itself by openly supporting attempts to bring down the country's leadership.

"This is what happens now. It is obvious that an attempt to recolonise the country has been made. This time they failed. But there is no guarantee that they will not try again," he said.

Addressing some 1,900 party leaders at the Umno extraordinary general meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Dr Mahathir said Umno still holds the key to whether or not foreign powers could recolonise Malaysia.

"As long as Umno is strong and solid, as long as unity in Umno cannot be broken, the attempt by foreign powers to paralyse and redominate this country will fail," he said.

Umno, he said, is no ordinary political party as it also forms the backbone and foundation of the ruling party, Barisan Nasional.

"If Umno is weak, the BN will also be weak; if BN is weak, the Government of Malaysia will also become weak and the weakness of the Malaysian Government will result in the country being colonised," he said.

Apart from the recolonisation attempt by foreign powers, Dr Mahathir spoke on democracy and cronyism and factionalism in Umno.

He said the former colonial powers discreetly try to weaken the newly-independent countries by creating disunity among the rakyat and provinces.

These former colonialists, he said, are prepared to supply weapons to certain factions so that the existing leaders will be weakened and the countries would come under their control.

They also started the propaganda on the so-called human rights abuse in these small, newly-independent countries, he said, noting that the colonialism is still very much alive and will thrive although the world enters the next millennium.

Until now, Malaysia has a credible Government through the formula created by Umno founders, and it is the responsibility of each Umno member and all Malays and Bumiputeras to ensure the continuity of the party's strength and credibility.

Cronyism and factions must not exist in the party as they will cause a split and weaken the party, he said, pointing out that a true democratic culture requires the election of leaders through friendly competition.

Democracy is the best political system created by man. Being man-made, the system has its pros and cons.

The advantages and disadvantages of democracy, he said, do not depend on the system, its constitution or the arrangement of its rules.

"The pros and cons of democracy depend on its practitioners themselves. If the practitioners are efficient and know the limitation of democracy, the democratic approach will bring benefits," he said.

On the other hand, if democratic practitioners concentrate only on the freedom in the system, regardless of the danger of such freedom, Dr Mahathir said this kind of democracy will destroy its practitioners.

He said the proposed amendments to the Umno Constitution would protect the party from the abuse of democratic freedom that could result in disunity and a weak party.

But he noted that the amended Constitution by itself cannot guarantee the party's credibility and its continued existence.

"The things that guarantee the credibility of the party is the understanding and ability of party members in applying the Constitution," he said.

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