

31 OCT 1998

Abdullah-Demonstrations

STREET DEMONSTRATIONS INFRINGE ON THE RIGHT OF THE MAJORITY, SAYS ABDULLAH

SEPANG, Oct 31 (Bernama) -- Street demonstrations by sacked Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim infringe on the right of the majority of the people who want peace and stability in the country, Umno vice president Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

He said that this group of people had stated that they do not want their livelihood affected and political stability in the country threatened.

"They (demonstrators) appear as though they never care (about the voice of the majority). They are prepared to riot just for one man," he said at a meet-the-people session at Bandar Baru Salak Tinggi, here.

In this respect, he called on Umno members to take a firm stand in denouncing such street demonstrations as Umno had to proceed with its role to defend the country's sovereignty and stability from whatever threats.

"Such street demonstrations will result in investors staying away. And if this is allowed to happen, it will affect and retard our efforts towards economic recovery like we all expect," he said.

Abdullah said that groups like Gerak were actually not genuinely fighting for Anwar but taking advantage of the situation just like some of the non-governmental organisations.

"As far as I know, from history, PAS and DAP never take to Anwar. As such, they are only taking advantage of the situation to achieve their own agenda," he said.

He said that Umno members should realise that Anwar, the former Umno deputy president, had been given the opportunity twice to explain his position to the Supreme Council unlike Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik who was not given such an opportunity.

He also said that Anwar's expulsion from the party was unanimous after efforts had been made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is Umno president, for him to bow out gracefully.

Abdullah said that the party had to take action when Anwar insisted that he was a fighter and would fight all the way.

Touching on the economy, Abdullah, who is Foreign Minister, said that the economic measures initiated by Dr Mahathir were now attracting attention and support from others and if such measures were successful in reviving the economy, there was a possibility the other developing countries would emulate Malaysia.

"If we succeed, they will realise that not only the IMF, but there are other cures that could be prescribed according to the needs of the developing countries," he said.

"These were the ideas of Dr Mahathir. He had stated to the Cabinet how difficult it was initially to seek the support of economists, professionals and his Cabinet colleagues in agreeing to the approach to be introduced," he said.

Asked by reporters later on reports that Anwar's former political secretary Ezam Mohamed Noor had claimed having met secretly with several Umno members in Batam, Jakarta and Bangkok over anti-government plots, Abdullah said that stern action had to be taken against those involved.

"If there are Umno members involved in such meetings said to have a certain agenda, we have to take action," he said.

However, he said that he was not aware of the matter.

Abdullah also said that Umno should proceed with its information

sessions to its members especially the younger generation so that they would not be confused over the current political development.

-- BERNAMA

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