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Dr M: Beware of subtle propaganda

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Umno must not be weakened by success and must always be wary of the possibility of attempts to bring it down, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said it was imperative that Umno be prepared at all times and be continuously united because "challenges and dangers lurk all the time".

"Success in any struggle does not mean that success will be permanent. If we allow ourselves to be weakened by our prosperity, believe me, the success that we have attained will be alienated from us," he said in his opening address, at the 52nd Umno general assembly at the Merdeka Hall of the Putra World Trade Centre.

Dr Mahathir's address themed, The Challenges of Turmoil, warned about the West's "very subtle propaganda".

"They create concepts all the time which supposedly reflect an advanced civilisation that is more consistent with time. We will not realise that we have been used by them.

"There will be those among us who, in fact, do not want to be regarded as being left behind.

"These people always accept the current thinking of the West," he said.

Touching on democracy, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia accepted this as a good system with the greater probability of producing a fair and effective leadership "though this is not definite".

Citing the success of democracy in Malaysia, he said this was so because "we Malaysians, Malaysian politicians, Malaysian political parties know how to use this democratic system".

"If democracy merely refers to majority rule, the Malays which make up the majority of Malaysians can use racial sentiments to establish a 100 per cent Malay Government.

"With the rights of a majority Government, chosen through a democratic process, the Malays can then claim all the country's riches for themselves, deny and suppress other races, alter electoral boundaries so that Malay political power would be bigger, stronger and permanent."

Dr Mahathir said the Malaysian way of practising democracy emphasised justice for all races and had ensured political stability, resulting in the same party-led Government being voted to power.

He noted that there were accusations that democracy was non-existent in Malaysia because there was no change in Government after every election.

"They say change is part of democracy. If there is no change, then there is no democracy. And many of us feel slightly embarrassed as there is no change.

"But remember, the right to maintain Governments is not contradictory to democracy. In fact, it becomes part of democracy if this preservation is in accordance with the people's wishes," he said.

Touching on Islam as a guide to overcoming economic problems, Dr Mahathir said Umno was an instrument that has adopted the struggles of the Prophet to change the fate of Malay Muslims and other Bumiputeras in Malaysia.

They have charted incredible progress from a race lacking in discipline and confidence to one that was successful and capable to compete with others and face challenges.

Dr Mahathir said sadly there were those who did not want to see this

success continue and were trying to destroy "all that we have built, the progress we have achieved and the corporate figures we have nurtured".

"Their intention is to enslave the Malays and Bumiputeras once again," he added.

On the future of Umno, Dr Mahathir said, as with everything else in the world, the party too "is not permanent".

"But its lifespan need not be shortened because we are careless, inefficient and obsessed with quick gains.

"The Umno struggle is not over yet. There is plenty more that Umno has to do. The Malays and Bumiputeras are still not strong enough to be left alone to fend for themselves without Umno's leadership and protection," Dr Mahathir said, adding that they were still not strong enough to compete in this ever-changing world.

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