

19 DEC 1998

Abdullah-Umno

UMNO NEEDS SINCERE MEMBERS, SAY ABDULLAH

IPOH, Dec 19 (Bernama) -- Umno, the foundation of the Barisan Nasional government's strength, needs sincere members because any action that opposes the party's struggle will cause it to weaken and lose respect, vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

Umno wanted its members to fight for the party and not criticise its own leaders to the extent of humiliating the party, he told reporters after attending a dinner organised by the Ipoh Barat Umno division, here, last night.

He said, however, that it was difficult to identify insincere members and that it was easier to fight external forces.

He said Umno members had a responsibility to make the party strong and respected so that it could continue to play a significant role in enhancing the dignity of the people and country in the next millennium.

On the resolution of several problems with Singapore, Abdullah, who is Foreign Minister, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his counterpart Goh Chok Tong had reached an agreement on the matter and the officials of both countries would start discussions as soon as possible.

Among the issues to be discussed are water supply to Singapore, the customs, immigration and quarantine centre and Kereta Tanah Melayu land in the republic and joint development projects.

On Malaysians in Iraq, which had been bombed by the United States and Britain for the past two days, he said there was no need yet to recall them but if they wanted to return, the ministry would help them.

Meanwhile, in TANAH MERAH, acting Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein advised its members to give priority to the institution of the party rather than the leaders.

Leaders would come and go but the party remained as an institution that would determine the lifestyle of the people and country, he said at a meet-the-people session yesterday.

He said the disunity in Umno was the result of some members no longer respecting the institution of the party and instead giving priority to certain leaders.

He said all party members had a responsibility to give their loyalty and full support to Dr Mahathir who was an elected leader who had displayed good and effective leadership.

-- BERNAMA

HJ MNR JK