

28 JAN 1999

Abdullah-Sabah

ABDULLAH TICKS OFF OPPOSITION FOR ANTI-FEDERAL SENTIMENTS

KOTA KINABALU, Jan 28 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today reprimanded the opposition in Sabah for constantly trying to conjure up the issue that the state is always at the beckoning of the federal government.

He said it was improper of opposition leaders to misintrepret the good relations between the state and federal leaders as this could undermine the prevailing stability in Sabah.

"It may be a bit harsh to say what the opposition is doing is very irresponsible, but this is the reality," he said addressing federal and state government officers at the Maksak hall in Likas near here.

He said the governing Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) is part of the democratically elected federal BN which has been committed to running and developing the country as well as looking after the interests of the masses.

"Why should Kuala Lumpur be oppressing Sabah or Sabah kowtowing to the federal government. This is a relationship of consultation between them," he said when elaborating his remarks at the function to reporters later.

Several opposition leaders, especially those from Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS), had claimed that Sabah no longer has state rights since it came under BN rule.

Abdullah said: "Sabah has a BN government and as such it obviously acts according to BN policies and it follows that ties between the Sabah state government and the federal government always remain close and they are constantly in consultations."

He said it was only natural for leaders of both governments to regularly discuss matters of the people's interests.

"There's nothing wrong with Chief Minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok wanting to telephone Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad even 10 times a day," he said.

He said such an atmosphere was non-existent when Sabah was under opposition rule as the state government then chose to go about by itself, let alone the strong parochialism of earlier Sabah leaders.

Abdullah said that an inferiority complex and anger at the federal government could have prompted charges of Sabah having to kowtow to Kuala Lumpur.

However, he said, this should not arise at all as Malaysians are citizens of a country well-respected world-wide.

He expressed hope that civil servants in Sabah did not subscribe to the notion that good ties existed between the state and federal governments mainly because the federal government ruled Sabah.

The presence of federal and peninsular civil servants in Sabah should not be misconstrued as an attempt to impose federal will and powers on Sabah as the opposition had purported, he said.

"Federal government officers are only in Sabah to serve and help bring about development to Sabah and not more than that. They don't have the colonial mentality," he said.

On his talks with Dompok upon arrival here earlier today for a three-day visit, Abdullah said they discussed a wide range of topics.

"We discuss several things.. from state-federal government ties to efforts towards enhancing cooperation and other matters as well," Abdullah added.

-- BERNAMA
JS RN