

05 MAY 1999

Abdullah-Issue

ANWAR ISSUE IS OF NOT MUCH INFLUENCE OVERSEAS- SPECIAL ENVOY

BANGI, May 5 (Bernama) -- The sacking of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as Deputy Prime Minister has not in anyway influenced other countries nor has it tarnished Malaysia's image in the eyes of the world, Special Envoy to the United Nations Datuk Abdullah Ahmad said today.

For instance, the Anwar issue did not influence UN members when they elected non-permanent members to the Security Council and in fact Malaysia was voted in with a very large number of votes at the end of last year.

"In the United States, the issue is no doubt played up by the media but not all people are influenced and that included business people who are more concerned with investment opportunities than current political issues," he said after delivering a talk on "Economic Pressures on Mahathir's Foreign Policy" at the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) here.

He was asked whether the Anwar issue had tarnished Malaysia's image in the eyes of the world and at the UN.

Abdullah said that initially a senior Malaysian officer at the UN influenced by media reports on the issue predicted that Malaysia would not easily get a seat in the council but now the officer had been proved wrong.

"The issue did not in anyway affect the final voting as the big majority of the members chose Malaysia as one of the non-permanent members of the Security Council," he said.

He was confident that the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed would be re-elected in the general election in view of the numerous facilities and benefits which the government had brought for the people.

Dr Mahathir is a courageous and firm leader who spoke without fear or favour and for this he was well respected and the West seeing the merits of his call for restructuring the world's financial system was feeling uneasy, he said.

As Dr Mahathir was a brave leader who spoke his mind, the West was uneasy as it preferred a leader from a developing country to merely bow to their wishes.

In his talk, Abdullah said Malaysia's foreign policy under Dr Mahathir was flexible, pragmatic, free and neutral and this had proved to be beneficial to Malaysia.

Abdullah said that before Dr Mahathir became Prime Minister, Malaysia's foreign policy was limited to normal diplomacy but Dr Mahathir pioneered the field of diplomacy which also encompassed economics and trade. He is also a pioneer in the field of Information Technology.

On Malaysia-Singapore relations, he said there were groups which wished to see both countries quarrel always and be suspicious of each other but happily they had not succeeded.

"Nevertheless Malaysia and Singapore will compete in the context of bringing benefits and good to their respective peoples. Singapore is always alert to any slight ruffle in bilateral relations. The republic also did not meddle in the internal affairs of its Asean partners," he added.

--BERNAMA

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