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Mahathir-Umno (Message)

COUNTER THE DIRTY POLITICS OF OPPOSITION, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, June 17 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged Umno members to close ranks and strengthen the party to counter the dirty politics of the opposition that could destroy the country.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said they should expose the negative actions and bad intentions of such practitioners to prove the falsity of the opposition struggle.

"These people are not the least bothered that their tactics and actions can cause disunity in society and weaken the country," he said in his message in the souvenir programme for the 53rd Umno General Assembly here.

The four-day general assembly kicked off today with the Umno Youth and Wanita Umno assemblies which were simultaneously opened by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

In his address, Abdullah, who is performing the duties of the Umno deputy president, conveyed a similar message when he urged Umno members to expose the trickery of people who tried to deny the role of Islam in Umno's struggle and accused the party of being chauvinistic.

Dr Mahathir said Umno members should unite and consolidate the party to face these threats and challenges.

"Although there are various parties, including elements in the country, who are hoping that Umno will become weak and subsequently collapse, this should not frighten us," he said.

The Prime Minister said as long as Umno members believed in and were committed to the party's struggle to improve the people's lives, and implement its agenda in a determined manner, Umno would remain in power and relevant in national politics.

He also criticised certain opposition parties which did not have clear and solid agendas.

"If we study the opposition groups that have just emerged and those scheming with them, (we can see that) their struggles are very shallow," Dr Mahathir said.

Dr Mahathir said they had no plans at all for the good of the race and country.

"Instead they only echo what is said by their puppet-masters from outside the country," he said.

He said they should check attempts by opposition parties which were full of rhetoric but devoid of substance, efforts which were merely based on instilling hatred towards the ruling party and its leaders to get the people's support.

"On the other hand, we should ensure that Umno's struggle to protect people of the Malay stock, Malaysians in general, the religion and country will continue to be successful," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the economic downturn that the country had faced for almost the past two years had left a deep impact on the people's lives.

The Umno-led government did not take the problem lying down but had implemented various measures to reduce the burden faced by the people, he said.

As usual, the government's efforts for economic recovery had met with criticisms from various parties, especially the foreign media and international agencies, he said.

He said it was the government's stand that the country's economic

problems should be solved by the people themselves.

"But these efforts can only succeed if there is political order in the country," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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