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Mahathir-PAS

DR MAHATHIR EXPOSES PAS' ATTEMPT TO LIE TO THE PEOPLE

PETALING JAYA, Nov 24 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight exposed PAS' efforts at slandering and lying to the people by distributing a letter allegedly written by the Prime Minister allowing American troops to be based in Malaysia and establishing diplomatic relations with Israel.

The Prime Minister described the attempt as a major lie and a serious slander on him and the Barisan Nasional (BN) government in order to get the people's support in the coming general election.

"Today I found another attempt at lying and slandering which claimed that I had written a letter to the Israeli Prime Minister promising to allow American troops to be based in Malaysia and promising to establish diplomatic relations with Israel," he said in a speech at the People's Gathering With the Prime Minister at Bandar Sunway, here.

More than 10,000 people of various stratas of society attended the gathering including Selangor BN candidates, among them Tan Sri K.S.Nijhar for the Subang parliamentary seat, Datuk Chan Kong Choy (Selayang) and Datuk Mohamed Mohd Zain (Shah Alam). Also present was Menteri Besar Datuk Abu Hassan Omar.

Dr Mahathir said the people should not be surprised by the circulation of such letters.

The Prime Minister said he believed the letter, dated Aug 16, 1999, would be distributed to the public soon.

He denied writing the letter, which carried the Federal government's letterhead and the Prime Minister's Department address in Putrajaya, as the signature was different and the English used was unlike the government's.

As such, he said the people should not fall for such a lie propagated by the opposition in seeking to win support.

With a copy of the letter in his hand, Dr Mahathir read out its contents which among others mentioned the address and name of the Israeli Prime Minister, the use of terms such as "The Honourable" and "On behalf of Umno and National Front" and under the signature was written the name of Mahathir Mohamad.

Dr Mahathir said official government letters he wrote did not refer to the name of his counterparts nor the address and terms used are "Your Excellency" and "On Behalf of the Government" rather than Umno or BN and his name Mahathir bin Mohamad is used in full.

The Prime Minister said the distribution of the letter only reflected another stupidity by PAS to lie to the people and to slander him and the government.

He said PAS should learn how to write an official letter, if they were so ignorant, then they should not try to lie.

Dr Mahathir, who spoke for an hour, said the BN would continue to advertise using pictures of riots to remind the people of the rioting that occurred previously that were instigated by the opposition.

"We don't deny (using advertisements showing riots), we want the rakyat to remember that rioting will only destroy the economy and peace. The BN will continue to show those pictures because they (opposition) started the chaos and don't have the right to rule the country," he said.

He said he was perplexed that the opposition had lodged police reports as a protest against the BN using the advestisements whereas previously during the riots the foreign media were providing extensive coverage on the

incidents.

He said the opposition, which previously accused police of brutality, now wanted the police to act on its allegation that the BN government intimidated the people through the use of advertisements.

Dr Mahathir said the BN strives for peace to prevail and to unite the people so that they could live in peace and harmony while enjoying economic and national development.

He said the BN government has always uphold democracy in which a general election is held each time the five-year term is up for the people to determine who should govern the country.

"We believe general elections are a permanent feature in Malaysia. We (the BN government) have never tried not to hold one," he said.

Although many countries practiced democracy, he said when some governments became too strong, they tried to cling to power by using measures such as the emergency in order not to hold an election.

The Prime Minister said the BN government was not afraid to hand over the power back to the people because it had proven that it could manage and administer the country efficiently.

He also said that the economic crisis faced by the country and the depreciation of the ringgit which resulted in many companies suffering losses had been successfully resolved by the government using its own approach without having to seek assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

"The BN government will not stop there, but will continue to take various efforts and measures to develop the country's economy," he said.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir was introduced to the Selangor BN candidates contesting in the general election by Abu Hassan.

Also present were the Prime Minister's wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and Abu Hassan's wife, Datin Seri Wan Noor.

-- BERNAMA

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