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Mahathir-Umno (Explanation)

EXPLANATION ON ANWAR ACCEPTED BY MANY, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, June 18 (Bernama) -- Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad believes that his explanation regarding his former deputy, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, was accepted by a large section of the people who were previously doubtful of the charges against Anwar.

However, those who were obsessed with Anwar had closed their minds to the explanation, he told a news conference after the first day of the Umno general assembly, here, today.

"I feel that a large section will accept but the stubborn will not accept. They are obsessed...fanatical. To such people, the speech is not for them," he said.

Dr Mahathir likened them to robots because their hearts, ears and eyes were closed.

"If we watch 'Star Trek' and 'Star Wars' we know how to order the robots to shoot and they shoot," he said.

He said this stubborn group was, however, not regarded as a threat, "but we need a two-thirds majority in the next general election and as such, we cannot afford to neglect any matter."

He said it was not too late now to explain the Anwar issue to the students although Umno had decided not to disrupt their studies.

"We wanted them to concentrate (on their studies) so that they'll return with qualifications, especially the Malay students. We do not have too many outstanding Malay students," he said.

If they were more interested in politics and neglected their studies, the aspiration to have more Malay engineers, lawyers and other professionals would be hard to realise, he said.

Umno, filled with a sense of responsibility, did not approach the students like the opposition which spent their time sowing hatred towards the government, he added.

He likened the opposition's strategy to that of the Nazis whose hatred for the Jews blinded them to everything else.

He said the students who had been indoctrinated to hate were now working in government agencies and getting good pay but instead of being grateful, they bit the hand that fed them.

The prime minister stressed that the explanation on Anwar's alleged misconduct must continue because "this obsessed group" was trying to incite Umno members.

On the allegations of "puppet" and "traitor" against Anwar, he said Anwar would of course deny them.

"He can say it...but we know that he is a puppet because he follows the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and all the instructions of foreigners and they campaign for him.

"I myself do not have foreigners campaigning for me. Some Thais had expressed their support but not to ask me to become their prime minister," he said.

Dr Mahathir believed that like in Indonesia, the call for political reformation had been pushed to its limit but instead Umno was getting stronger.

The spirit shown by the party members and the number that turned up for the annual assembly were extraordinary and they were there to see this empty talk on reformation rejected.

He said the party members realised that the reformation call was only a

gimmick to garner support.

Asked by foreign journalists on the dissatisfaction expressed by foreign parties on the Anwar issue, Dr Mahathir said the opinions of others were not important.

"The general opinion in this country supports the decision of the court. The opinion of many in the foreign press is a different matter. They are not our concern.

"I'm not contesting in the general election of another country except Malaysia and it is the opinion of the majority in Malaysia that counts. From what I see, the general opinion in Malaysia supports the government...the majority of them. We don't care about the majority opinion in other countries.

-- BERNAMA

AD SHO JK