

20 JUN 1999

Umno-Debate (Religion)

MAHATHIR A TRUE FIGHTER OF ISLAM, SAYS DELEGATE

KUALA LUMPUR, June 20 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is a genuine fighter and champion of Islam who has done more for the race and religion than any PAS leaders, the Umno general assembly was told today.

Federal Territory delegate Muin Abdul Manaf said the Prime Minister, however, was not one who liked to show off his Islamic qualities.

Dr Mahathir did not have to begin his speeches with long prayers in Arabic because he was always praying for the good of the religion, race and country, he said when debating the motion on religion on the final day of the four-day assembly.

"Dr Mahathir needs no skull cap or beard to show he is a true Muslim leader because the sparkle from his appearance alone is enough reflection of his sincerity in struggling for the race, religion and country," he said.

He said while Dr Mahathir sent troops to Bosnia, "PAS leaders declared a jihad (holy war) against Umno".

Describing PAS as a spoiler and irritant, he said its leaders were only good at using government facilities like mosques to criticise the government and Umno.

He said PAS also made use of government institutions of higher learning to poison the minds of students and lecturers.

"That is PAS, a party using the religion for its own satisfaction and desire," he said.

Compared to Umno, PAS had done virtually nothing for Muslims in terms of the development of the economy, education and religion, he said.

He also urged the civil court authorities to create a dress code for Muslim accused so that their dressing would not lead to a negative perception of Islam.

Muin said this was because many of those charged with criminal offences like rape and murder appeared in court with skull caps, headgears and robes which were usually worn by religious people.

Perlis delegate Arof Saad suggested that Umno hold more talks throughout the country to counter the smear campaign mounted by PAS against Dr Mahathir and other Umno leaders.

Among the lies was that Dr Mahathir fell sick and could not perform religious rituals when he went for the haj in Mecca early this year, he said.

"This lie, posted on the Internet while Dr Mahathir was still in the holy land, was then spread by PAS at its ceramah in Perlis," he said.

He said Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim, who is state Umno chief, had dismissed such talk on his return from Mecca, while Perlis Umno also held talks to counter the lie spread by PAS.

"PAS leaders should emulate Dr Mahathir who always urges the people to do good, instead of influencing people to be disobedient, spread lies and hurt other people's feelings," he said.

-- BERNAMA

AKT ARA MAI YBY