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Mahathir-Umno (Foreign)

MAHATHIR WARNS M'SIANS OF ATTEMPTS BY FOREIGNERS TO WEAKEN UMNO

KUALA LUMPUR, June 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded Malaysians of attempts by foreign powers to weaken and destroy Umno, the Barisan Nasional (BN) and the government by supporting and helping the opposition pact.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said the foreign powers were very happy at the eagerness of the opposition parties and their affiliates to weaken Umno, the ruling BN coalition and the government.

He said this in his speech themed "National Dignity Umno's Responsibility" when opening Umno's 53rd general assembly at the Putra World Trade Center here.

Although the foreign powers were least interested in Islam, this did not stop them from praising and supporting PAS, which was said to be an Islamic party, he said.

Dr Mahathir said: "Maybe, they too know that actually PAS is not as Islamic as it claims."

Dr Mahathir said the foreigners treated Umno as the stumbling block because they were aware of Umno's strength which formed the backbone of the government and Malaysia's firmness.

He said only Umno's destruction would fulfill their desire.

"They are aware without a formidable Umno, Barisan Nasional will not be stable and strong. Therefore, they will support whatever actions by anyone, and they will continue to work alone to weaken or destroy Umno," he said.

Without mentioning names, Dr Mahathir said their plan to install their puppet as Umno leader and prime minister failed and that they could no longer control the country through their puppet.

Dr Mahathir said foreign critics claimed that he blamed foreigners with all sorts of things to divert domestic problems that he was facing.

He asked: "But are my accusations baseless. Is it not true that the foreign media are deliberately tarnishing our image?"

Dr Mahathir said the foreign media carried no good report on the country and made no mention of Malaysia's finer points of being a peaceful and stable multi-racial country and developing rapidly compared to other developing countries.

He said that not once were the successes of Malaysia's New Economic Policy and in privatising corporations recognised, let alone be given positive comments.

Also not given due recognition by the foreign media were the fact that the attacks on the country's currency and stock market did not permanently damage the economy and that the government managed to bring about economic recovery through its own ways, he said.

"In turn, they tried to curb our economic recovery, lowering our ratings so that we cannot obtain credit. They also tried to threaten our political stability by deliberately encouraging demonstrators to riot to topple the government through violence," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the foreigners branded him a dictator only because he refused to bow to them.

"The real dictator is supported by them if he subscribes to their wishes or buy arms from them," he said.

He said the accusations he had thrown against foreigners were not to cover up internal problems, "but because they actually threaten and worsen our economy and the country's image."

The prime minister said he did not have to divert the people's attention to the activities of foreigners due to domestic problems.

"Sometimes it crosses the mind that the foreigners and their media's hatred towards Malaysia stems from Malaysia being a country coincidentally ruled by a party comprising Muslims," he said.

He said what was fuelling their hatred was that Umno, being a credible, disciplined and well-organised Muslim party, was able to administer and develop the country.

"Many among them are of the opinion that Muslims cannot possibly succeed, more so when their skin colour is brown. Obviously they cannot administer a country until it can progress rapidly and modernise," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that to avoid recolonisation by foreign powers, Malaysians must realise that their independence and freedom could be lost within a short period.

"When independence is lost, it is not easily restored," he said.

Malaysians should recognise this reality if they valued their independence and wish to maintain their ability to determine their destiny.

He said although direct colonisation by any nation on another country was unacceptable today, it did not mean that the desire to colonise has vanished from the culture of the colonialist, particularly ethnic Europeans.

-- BERNAMA

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