

26 MAY 1999

Razaleigh-Ulama

PAS LEADERS USING TITLE "ULAMA" FOR POLITICS, SAYS RAZALEIGH

KOTA BAHARU, May 26 (Bernama) -- Pas which claimed to be championing the cause for "ulama" leadership is actually among those who use Islam as a means to gain the influence and support of the people, said former Parti Melayu Semangat 46 (S46) president Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah today.

He said that based on his past association with Pas in the Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah, the opposition coalition that won the 1990 general election in Kelantan, Pas leaders who called themselves "ulama" (theologians in Islamic matters) frequently made statements in the interest of their party and not Islam.

"They are certainly well versed in Islamic matters but they are still politicians, acting according to a political policy," he told reporters at his residence, here.

"I don't see them acting like ulama because what they do is for the party and not Allah. That is why they are partisan, trying to protect the interest and struggle of the party," he said.

Tengku Razaleigh said that in attempts to use Islam for politics, these groups freely issued statements which were regarded as "fatwa" (religious ruling) by section of the people who supported them.

In this respect, he said he fully concurred with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that "ulama" did not take sides and free to express their views such as the Fatwa Council.

Dr Mahathir had yesterday told a dialogue session during a international seminar on Islam that he would only acknowledge "ulama" who did not have political agenda and who interpreted issues based on the Quran.

In Malaysia, said the Prime Minister, it was difficult to find "ulama" in the real sense of the word as they were many who claimed to be such but made interpretations based on political agenda.

Tengku Razaleigh said the people should be careful with statements made by the so-called "ulama" since it could jeopardise peace and unity.

Asked about the failure of the Kelantan government to protect the environment when it allowed widespread development and logging in Lojing highlands in Gua Musang, the MP for Gua Musang said this could be because the state government was too dependent on timber for revenue.

With the declining price of timber, he said Kelantan was expected to face serious financial problem in meeting state government's expenses and salary of the staff in future.

--BERNAMA

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