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Youth-DPM

SYSTEM OF APPOINTING DPM HAS ALWAYS WORKED, SAYS UMNO YOUTH

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 15 (Bernama) -- The system of appointing a Deputy Prime Minister by the Prime Minister of Malaysia has always worked, Umno Youth said today.

Its chairman of the international affairs council Abdul Azim Mohd Zabidi said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad made his choice just as he did in 1986, and former Prime Minister Tun Hussein Onn did 10 years before that and similarly by Tun Abdul Razak Hussein in 1973.

As to the appointment of Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as the Deputy Prime Minister last Friday, he said it was made after Dr Mahathir consulted another party vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and former Finance Minister Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.

Both pledged support for Abdullah whom they considered as the right choice, he said in a statement responding to an article in the Jan 11 issue of the Asian Wall Street Journal which the movement deemed as biased and prejudiced.

The article titled "Mahathir Fills Key Positions With Loyalists But Choice of Deputy Could Roil UMNO: Party Elections Put Off" by Leslie Lopez, among others, claimed that Dr Mahathir had reasserted his grip by appointing two loyalists -- Abdullah and Tun Daim Zainuddin -- to key positions and dodged a potential challenge by postponing party elections.

Abdul Azim said the article was full of inaccuracies and inconsistencies right from the first paragraph.

It also reflected bias and prejudice on the part of Lopez which to a large extent show that he either was unaware of historical evidence and facts or chose to ignore them.

Lopez also said Abdullah's appointment could "further fracture Umno" and the Cabinet reshuffle showed the promotion of other loyalists and demotion of politicians aligned to former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Abdul Azim also chided political economist K. Jomo Sundram for his remarks in the article, saying that Dr Mahathir had alienated Najib and Tengku Razaleigh by not choosing them.

In line with party tradition, he said Dr Mahathir had to choose from either Najib or Abdullah, who are in the next line of succession.

"I would like to suggest that Lopez and Sundram look at historical evidence as they would be able to deduce that whenever there has been a vacancy in Umno for the Number Two post, one of the vice-president has always been chosen to fill the slot," he said.

In 1973, upon the death of the then Deputy Prime Minister Tun Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman, Razak appointed Hussein, who was then the third vice-president.

In 1976, when Tun Razak died, Hussein appointed Dr Mahathir, who was then the third vice-president and in 1986 when former deputy prime minister Datuk Musa Hitam resigned, Dr Mahathir appointed Tun Ghafar Baba, who was also the third vice-president.

On claims that Dr Mahathir appointed two loyalists -- Abdullah to Home Ministry and Daim to Finance Ministry, Abdul Azim asked how Dr Mahathir gained by giving up the two ministries whereas he would be more powerful if he retained the two ministries.

-- BERNAMA

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