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Syed Hamid-Umno

COMPETITION WON'T LEAD TO DISUNITY, SAYS SYED HAMID

KUALA LUMPUR, 15 Jan (Bernama) -- Competition in the Umno elections in May will not lead to disunity in the party, Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

Under the democratic practise, contests are healthy in determining the strength of a party, he said.

"Through competition, we are able to choose the best talents within our leadership, whoever it is that we think are good and credible for the future of the party," he said.

Syed Hamid, who is the foreign minister, was speaking to reporters at his Aidilfitri open house at Wisma Putra.

He said it was important that Umno members and divisions were allowed to exercise their right to nominate anyone whom they felt were qualified for the posts.

"Let's not do react in a shock manner when the names of whoever are proposed," he said.

Syed Hamid, who plans to contest for a vice-president's post, said Umno was matured enough to accept competition.

"If a person is good at assessing himself and values national interest, he should be contesting as it would be good for Umno.

"If people see that Umno is closed-door, they will become bored with Umno," he said.

On the existence of factions within the party with the approach of the Umno polls, Syed Hamid said: "I think it is such capmps that previously brought down Umno and weakened the party."

Syed Hamid said there should not be factions because contests in Umno were competition among friends struggling for the same cause.

"Why say this person is not ours, don't want to talk to this person (and) create factions. It will be a loss for Umno. And I hope there won't be a repeat of the 1993 and 1996 experiences," he said.

Syed Hamid also commented on the Umno Supreme Council's stand that the divisions should nominate Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for the president's and deputy president's posts.

He said this was not a directive because the two top posts would still be filled through the nomination process.

"If there are no other candidates, then they (Dr Mahathir and Abdullah) win. This is in accordance with the democratic practise. But if there are other nominations, we can't say they are invalid.

"We had only recommended these two persons to the divisions," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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