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Mahathir-Independence

UMNO WILL CONTINUE TO DEFEND MALAYSIA'S INDEPENDENCE

KUALA LUMPUR, June 5 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Umno will continue to defend Malaysia's independence and will never allow the country to be toyed with or made a puppet of any foreign power.

The prime minister said the Umno supreme council meeting today, the first since its general assembly last month, discussed Malaysia's independence and agreed that Malaysia should be free and not be shackled by any party.

"This attitude and independence we will preserve," the Umno president told a media conference after chairing the council meeting, here.

He said Umno was aware that some foreign quarters were unhappy to see Malaysia chalking up success after success although its leaders were critical of the big powers on international issues.

"The foreigners are so unhappy with Malaysia because Malaysia has succeeded although it is vocal in its criticisms of the foreign countries," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia's success had caused unhappiness among certain people, especially the western media, who wanted to see Malaysia suffer for refusing to accept the views of the West and the Umno-led government weak and in shambles.

He said Malaysia was not ashamed of its method and approach in tackling problems on democracy, finance, industry and the distribution of wealth among the races in the country.

"We are not ashamed and we will defend (our method and approach) for the good of our nation without considering foreign views," he said.

"We feel that we are capable of defending our nation and we will not bow to anyone," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the meeting also discussed the problem of corruption and several proposals were made to curb money politics within the party.

"We will study these approaches and try to implement them to reduce, if not completely wipe out, money politics within the party...we want to see an Umno that is clean of money politics," he said.

He said the meeting also discussed ways to further strengthen the party but did not elaborate.

Problems raised at the Umno general assembly including the lack of bumiputera participation in the new townships and in trade and industry and lack of property ownership by bumiputeras were also discussed at the meeting.

He said efforts to overcome these problems were important to Umno.

-- BERNAMA

MNY JK