

30 MAR 2001

Mahathir-Keadilan

PM REGRETS KEADILAN'S SECRET MEETING WITH FOREIGN DIPLOMATS

BAHAU, March 30 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed regret over the action of Parti Keadilan Nasional which is reported to have held a secret meeting with several foreign diplomats to garner support for Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to undergo surgery overseas.

The prime minister said Malaysia did not want to see foreigners meddling in its affairs because this would tantamount to undermining its independence.

"If we invite them to interfere today, don't be angry if they want to decide on who becomes the prime minister, minister and so forth tomorrow," he said

"This has happened in other places," he told reporters after a closed-door meeting with the Jempol and Jelebu Umno division leaders in Bandar Baru Serting, near here.

He said this when asked to comment on press reports today that several foreign diplomats, including former United States ambassador to Malaysia John R. Malott, had attended a briefing in Kuala Lumpur yesterday on the health of the former deputy prime minister who is suffering from spinal ailment.

The report said that the meeting, at a hotel, was held under tight security and kept secret from the media.

Among the foreign diplomats reported to have attended the meeting were those from the United States, France, Indonesia, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Dr Mahathir said it was best for the citizens to solve their own problems without outside interference.

"Whatever problem we face, we settle among ourselves..there's no need to seek help from others," he said.

It is understood that the briefing, which lasted nearly two hours, was organised by Keadilan allegedly to garner support to apply pressure on the government to allow Anwar to undergo surgery for back pain overseas.

Besides Keadilan president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail, who is Anwar's wife, the briefing was also attended by PAS president Datuk Fadzil Noor, DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang, Parti Rakyat Malaysia president Dr Syed Husin Ali and DAP secretary-general Kerk Kim Hock.

-- BERNAMA

APG DC AHH JK