

22 JUN 2001

Umno-Debate (Policy)

UMNO CORPORATE LEADERS TICKED OFF FOR NOT EXPLAINING ISSUES TO GRASSROOTS

KUALA LUMPUR, June 22 (Bernama) -- Corporate leaders, among Umno members, were ticked off today for not joining forces with grassroots members to explain to the masses several corporate developments like the sale of Malaysia Airlines shares and the privatisation of several government agencies.

Umno Kedah Information Chief Datuk Badruddin Amiruldin said the duty to counter criticisms and accusations made by the opposition was only being handled at the grassroots level.

Infact, he said leaders and grassroots members were ignorant of developments surrounding certain issues.

Debating party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's policy speech on the second day of the 55th Umno general assembly here today, Badaruddin said the Supreme Council and relevant corporate leaders should explain certain issues to grassroots members so that they can extend the explanation to the people.

"We are not saying that all corporate leaders in Umno are keeping away from going down to the field, but there are those who have not done so," he said.

Badaruddin also said Dr Mahathir as Prime Minister should appoint Malay ministers from among Umno members while the post of chairman in corporate organisation in which the government had an interest should be held by Umno members.

He said Umno members who are involved in such corporate developments should explain to the employees of the relevant corporations about Umno so that they would not be influenced by the opposition.

"We know Datuk Jamaluddin Jarjis (Tenaga Nasional Berhad chairman) went on a nation-wide roadshow for this purpose," he said.

Badruddin, who normally entertained delegates with his humour which usually carried a subtle message, was at it again today when he told a story of a boy who literally followed what his father advised him to do if he had the urge to urinate at night.

The small boy who had a problem of frequent urination was advised by the father to mutters the words "I want to sing" into the ears of his grandmother if he felt like urinating in the middle of the night.

Hence, when the boy was left to stay with his grandmother and had the urge to urinate at midnight, he woke up and urinated slowly into his grandmother's ears.

The message behind this humour, according to Badruddin, is if the information by the higher-ups in Umno to those on the ground was not accurate, it would lead to misinformation.

Kelantan Umno division delegate Datuk Ibrahim Ali said an Umno member should not hold too many posts outside the party as he would not be able to carry out party responsibilities at the grassroots level.

Some members are given too many posts to assume, up to seven or eight and this would keep them preoccupied and hence neglect party work, he added.

"I would like to question why many Petronas and Tenaga Nasional Bhd employees support the opposition. Where is Datuk Jamaluddin Jarjis," he asked.

He added that those at the helm of Petronas and Tenaga should be blamed if their employees support the opposition and not chiefs of Umno divisions.

"If they fail, we should replace them with others. In Umno, there are many leaders," he said while proposing that Umno members should hold posts outside the party for a period of between one and two years only.

Ibrahim also called on members to strengthen their fighting spirit to oppose slander, opposition politics and to correct what they feel was wrong within Umno.

He added that Umno's performance in the last general election was not satisfactory and this was not due to the opposition being strong but because Umno members lacked political struggle.

Ibrahim called on members of Umno Youth to be more aggressive and to cut out rhetorics and let welfare issues be handled by Umno Wanita and Puteri Umno.

"Hishammuddin (Tun Hussein, Umno Youth Chief), can hand over his post to me in 2004 if he cannot cope, there is no need to contest. He's already a minister, now shows us that you are better than Mahfuz (Omar) and Mat (Mohamad) Sabu (PAS leader)," he said.

He also said Umno Youth should enhance Umno's image for the sake of Malay interest and it should be firm when dealing with the Chinese Association of Malaysia Election Appeal Committee.

Ibrahim, who is also the chairman of the committee on slander, apologised to party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, for failing to curb the spread of slander by the opposition party among the Malays in the last general election.

Meanwhile, Terengganu delegate Datuk Abdul Rashid Ngah described Dr Mahathir's policy speech yesterday as an "operation" on Umno and the Malays.

"Like a doctor, he had performed surgery on his patients because he knows his patient is sick and must have the problem treated or removed," he said.

The "operation" must be performed to restore unity among members at all levels to ensure Barisan Nasional's victory in the next elections.

"Defeat is painful and sad. Do not let the BN's defeat in Kelantan and Terengganu repeat in other states. Be the winning team and not the team that has lost," said Abdul Rashid.

In his debate, he also suggested that the Internal Security Act (ISA) be used on persons who abuse religion for their political motives.

-- BERNAMA

NHA ZS RON DVS