

29 JUL 2002

Mahathir-Dilemma

MAHATHIR SPELLS OUT DILEMMAS CONFRONTING THE MALAYS

PETALING JAYA, July 29 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight spoke of two new dilemmas facing the Malays -- whether they want to let a so-called Islamic party destroy them and the country, and whether they should do away with "crutches" in order to become a successful race.

The prime minister said the emergence of the party in the country had resulted in the struggle to build the resilience of the Malays being deflected by the so-called religious imperatives invented by political Islam.

He said the country was now seeing the abuse of the teachings of Islam as politicians from that party cashed in on the deep faith of the Malay Muslims to trap them and close their minds.

In his speech titled 'The New Malay Dilemma' presented at the Harvard Club of Malaysia dinner here, Dr Mahathir said: "The dilemma that the Malays and the people of Malaysia face is whether we should, in the name of democracy, allow the country to be destroyed or we ensure that people are not subjected to manipulations to the point where they will use democracy to destroy democracy."

Noting that most democratic countries were mindful of this possibility, he said many so-called liberal democracies did not allow Communists and fascists to participate in their elections.

"They do this because they believe that if these parties win a democratic election they will put an end to democracy. Can we take a leaf from their book and risk condemnation for not being democratic?" he said.

Dr Mahathir told his audience that many Malays, not really understanding Islam, had been misled by the seemingly pious turban and Arabic dress of the Islamic party leaders.

They fanatically followed the dictates of this party even when this led to the country becoming misgoverned and to values against the teachings of Islam, he said.

He said it was not far-fetched to say that for many Malays, their Malay and Islamic values had been destroyed, and such was the deviation from Malay and Islamic culture that many were willing to vote and support a party which "advocates violence, which curses and swears and is led by immoral leaders."

"The end result of the deviation must be the election of a bad government and the stoppage of the efforts to ensure that the Malays remain politically empowered and economically as advanced as the other races," he added.

The prime minister said democracy was mainly about the people choosing the government to rule the country but sometimes the majority of the people might not be able to choose wisely because they had been completely brainwashed.

While emphasising that Malaysia was committed to democracy, Dr Mahathir said that because of the brainwashing by the so-called Islamic party, there was every danger of the wrong party being elected and forming the government.

"We have seen this happening in many countries where populist parties which promise all kinds of impossible things have been elected by a gullible electorate.

"It is possible for this to happen to Malaysia. It is entirely possible for all the prosperity, the stability and the racial harmony to be

destroyed," he said.

Turning to the dilemma of whether the Malays should or should not do away with "crutches" or special privileges and assistance from the government, Dr Mahathir said there was a minority of Malays who were confident enough to think of doing away with the crutches, albeit gradually.

Noting that their numbers were not going to increase any time soon, he said they were generally regarded as traitors to the Malay race.

"The dilemma faced by those few who want to build a strong, resilient and independent Malay race without crutches is that they are most likely to end up becoming unpopular and losing the ability to influence the changes in the culture and value system which are necessary.

"It seems that they should not try and yet they know that without the cultural changes the Malays are going to fail," he said.

Dr Mahathir said tht when he wrote the 'Malay Dilemma' in the late 60's, he had assumed that all the Malays lacked the opportunities to develop and become successful.

However, he said, the Malays subsequently did not seem to fully appreciate the various opportunities accorded to them, including in the field of business and education, to allow them to move ahead.

"Getting scholarships and places in the universities at home and abroad are considered a matter of right and are not valued anymore," he said, adding that in business, the vast majority regarded the opportunities given them as something to be exploited for the quickest return.

Dr Mahathir said the Malays had not been able to achieve the New Economic Policy ownership quota of 30 per cent because of their laid back attitude and inclination to take the easy way out.

"This is their culture. Working hard, taking risk and being patient is not a part of their culture," he added.

The prime minister also said that if the Malays remained dependent on crutches, they would remain weak and hence the need for them to change their culture, including having proper work ethics which involved taking pride in the result of their work rather than monetary reward alone.

"Unfortunately, their view is that their crutches are symbols of their superior status in the country. The sad thing is that they are not even using the crutches properly. To be strong and to be able to fend for themselves the crutches must be discarded," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that if the non-Malay contribution to the nation's economy was discounted, Malaysia would not be much better than some of the developing countries in Africa.

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