

02 NOV 2002

Mahathir-Enemies

UNITE TO FACE COUNTRY'S ENEMIES, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

PENANG, Nov 2 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on opposition parties to ease up on party politics and instead work together with the Barisan Nasional government (BN) to face external enemies.

The Prime Minister said everyone needed to work together with the government now in preparation to face threats from external enemies.

"We must ease up, reduce (party) politics because we have enemies from abroad and that is why we must unite to face external enemies," he told reporters after delivering his keynote address at the state level BN Convention at the Balik Pulau Sports Complex, here.

Also present were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Chief Minister and State BN chairman Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, his deputy Datuk Dr Hilmi Yahaya, BN secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamed Rahmat and leaders of state BN component parties.

Dr Mahathir, who is also BN chairman, said everyone must go easy on party politics to focus on efforts to continue the struggle for national development.

He also issued an open invitation to all members of opposition parties to join the BN as it practised an open policy and was willing to share power if they joined BN sincerely.

"This invitation is open to all parties. We are not power hungry, that's why we are willing to share power with other parties, and more and more of them are joining the BN with the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) being accepted back into the BN fold recently," he said.

Earlier in his speech, the Prime Minister said the invitation was also directed at members of parti Keadilan so that they would rejoin Umno to struggle together in developing the country.

"It's better for Keadilan to be dissolved and rejoin Umno. We are prepared to accept them as we had accepted back members of the Parti Semangat 46," he said.

He said Keadilan together with the DAP and PAS through the "barisan alternatif" coalition had no future in setting up their own government because the ties between them had become weak and were crumbling.

He said there was no possibility of a "barisan alternatif" government in future because the DAP and PAS were fighting among themselves concerning the setting up of an Islamic state and the cooperation between them no longer existed.

However, he said, if Keadilan members wished to return to Umno, their intention to do so must be sincere, that is, to be together with the BN government in developing the country and not purely because of certain objectives.

In addition, the Prime Minister said the power sharing concept adopted by the BN now enabled component parties to have their respective representatives in the government to discuss together solutions to problems faced by the country and to find a formula for national development.

He said this showed that the BN struggles were sincere and as such every member should not be greedy nor promote their self-interest alone.

"Don't be greedy, we don't take power 100 per cent for ourselves, because this could change to become zero," he said.

In addition, he said victory for every BN candidate still depended on the mutual support of the BN members and each of them must support the

candidates of other component parties although they might not be of the same race.

He said the mutual support would help BN to win with a better majority and with the bigger majority, BN would be able to form a credible and strong government.

"If the victory was only based on one or two seats, the BN government will not be able to plan for national development and if there were parties threatening to leave the BN, then BN would collapse," he explained.

Dr Mahathir said due to the mutual help and cooperation among the BN component parties at the moment, there was no party threatening to leave the BN and even if there were such a threat, BN would not fall.

He said such spirit should be maintained so that the country with its plural society would continue to be peaceful with no racial or religious riots as was the case in neighbouring countries.

-- BERNAMA

SA ZU AO