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Mahathir-Malays

THE MALAYS FAR FROM BEING SAFE, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, June 20 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the power of the Malays in the political arena will not guarantee the safety of the Malays if they are still weak, poor and backward.

He said that they should not think that their political power was permanent and guarantee the safety of the Malays forever.

Stressing that there was nothing permanent in human society, he said that certainly there was nothing permanent in human politics.

"Do not assume that after Umno, PAS will form the Government. In politics, the unexpected can happen."

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said this in his policy speech at the opening of the Umno General Assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here.

The annual general assembly, broadcast live nationwide over radio and television, is attended by 2,033 delegates and representatives of Umno Clubs and political parties from abroad.

Dr Mahathir however said that the Malays could secure themselves, make progress and regain their honour fully if they were aware of the dangers that they now face and make preparations to overcome them.

He said that the Malays, who are all Muslims and are the majority in Malaysia, were still weak, the poorest people and were backward.

"If we take out the Chinese and all that they have built and own, there will be no small or big towns in Malaysia, there will be no business and industry, there will be no funds for the subsidies, support and facilities for the Malays.

"The Malays will return to the time when they were colonised before; poor, uneducated and looked down by everyone," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that there were races which never progress and races which progressed and then were destroyed and disappeared from the surface of the earth.

He said that the Malays do not have ambitions to become a great race, a world power, but they do want to be always free, independent and not looked down upon, and colonised again.

Dr Mahathir said that even for this, they have to be alert and work hard so that not only will their political power be resuscitated and made permanent but the ability or everyone of them in all fields, in their mastery of knowledge and skills in business and industry were enhanced so that they could face and overcome all competition and challenges unassisted.

The prime minister said that the Malays do not lack anything as they have the brains, the energy and skills, the capacity, the manual ability and strength just like everyone else.

He said that if they had not succeeded after being given the opportunities many times, after they had been helped with all kinds of facilities and even money, the reason was that they were not hard-working.

The Malays, he said, were lazy and like to find the easy way and the quick way, no matter what the end results.

He said that they cannot be patient, cannot wait a while and want to be rich that very moment and because of this, when licences were given, they sell the licences, when approved permits (APs) for imports were given, they sell the permits, when they were given contracts, they sell the contracts

for cash.

No work was done other than to be close to people with influence and authority in order to get something because they were Malays, Bumiputeras, he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is Finance Minister, said that the Malays and the other Bumiputeras could succeed if they put in a little more effort and must be honest with themselves.

He said that they should manage their businesses properly and avoid doing what was improper, using loans for business for business only.

"Use with good care, manage properly because the money that is borrowed must be repaid. Before making a profit, do not spend in anticipation of a profit," he said.

The prime minister said that the Malays should learn from the Chinese businessmen who could still make profit even though the cost for them was higher after buying over licences or contracts from the Malays.

He was amazed over how the Malays and Bumiputeras cannot make profit even with lower cost.

He said that what was required of the Malays and other Bumiputeras to succeed in business was diligence, self-discipline and patience and learn the skills in business through training and experience.

Dr Mahathir also said that even if the Malays have to indulge in politics and have political parties, they should not divide themselves so much that even in facing the enemy or mutual problems they could not act together with the same aim.

"What is wrong in having the same stand when brothers of the faith are killed en masse by the Israelis?

"Should we, even in this matter, give priority to party politics more than to religion? Is there no more brotherhood in Islam between us?," he said.

He said that Muslims should not be apostatised so carelessly so much so that they cannot be brothers or at least cooperate when facing the same enemy.

"Let the common enemy be defeated first, then return to the enmity between us," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who has been at the helm of the government for 21 years, said that he had dreamt that he could change the perceptions he had, the perception of the Malays and the perception of the other races towards the Malays.

He said that he had tried as hard as he could and there were times when he was elated with what he thought was his success but mostly, he felt disappointed.

"I beg your pardon because I have failed. I pray that from among the Malays there will emerge a leader capable of changing certain characters of the Malays and the Bumiputeras so that they will have the culture more compatible with success," he said.

The prime minister also said that Umno was certainly the party which was capable of changing the culture of the Malays as the party had succeeded in uniting the Malays and removed their feeling of inferiority until they became brave enough to rise and face the colonialists, to demand for their rights.

"But unfortunately, this small success has spoiled or undermined the thinking of the Malays until they believe they are already safe and can do anything," he said.

He said that today, their national spirit had weakened and their ability to face challenges had been reduced.

If they were to be colonised today, he said, there was no guarantee that they would have the capacity to oppose the colonialists.

Dr Mahathir said that because of the split in their unity, their political clout had diminished but they were not yet aware of this.

"Today, when their rights and status are challenged openly, they are not capable of defending themselves," he said.

The Malays, he said, seek refuge through political power but because of the break in their ranks, their political power had been eroded and they were not as strong as before and one day this power would disappear altogether.

"This is fine if the Malay individual has become strong, possessing certain skills, skills in the field of knowledge and economy, the ability to compete without any special rights which they now consider as theirs," he said.

But, he said, they had not become strong individually and were actually not prepared to face any competition at all and were so afraid of the other communities.

Dr Mahathir said that without the experience of competing with others, if the protection was suddenly withdrawn, they would not be able to survive.

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