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Umno-Observers

FOREIGN POLITICAL PARTIES KEEN ON COOPERATING WITH UMNO

KUALA LUMPUR, June 18 (Bernama) -- Leaders of foreign political parties invited for the opening of the 57th Umno General Assembly tomorrow have expressed interest in fostering closer cooperation with Umno.

Deputy Secretary-General of the Central Executive Body of Indonesia's Golkar party Dr Bomer Pasaribu said his party was confident of repeating its success in the next general election taking the cue from Umno's strength.

Speaking to Bernama, he said Umno's strength was based on its sophisticated organisational structure, efficient management system and orderly rejuvenation.

Umno's strength was also due to its national ideology which was not extreme and also due to its strong Youth and Wanita wings with effective grassroot support as well as its longterm and short programmes which had vision and were flexible.

Recalling the long standing friendship with Umno, he said Golkar could learn from Umno's strength.

He was confident that Golkar could regain its position once more.

Meanwhile, Dr Hassan Ghararee from the Islamic Coalition Society (ICS) of Iran said Dr Mahathir had done a lot for Malaysia which could be emulated by the leaders of other Islamic nations.

Ghararee said ICS, the oldest political party in Iran which was invited for the second time to the general assembly, hoped to foster better relations with UMNO.

A Central Committee member of the Vietnam Communist Party (VCP) said the existing good relations and understanding between the VCP and Umno had helped the two friendly countries to develop stronger ties.

Bui Quang Huy told Bernama here today that Hanoi was confident that this relationship would be further enhanced in the future.

Quang Huy also said that the good ties forged in mid 1990s when the party was invited to attend the Umno General assembly for the first time had helped the leaders of the two countries develop a better relationship in economic cooperation, politics and people-to-people relations.

"I hope the relations between the parties and leaders will further develop in the future as in the past," he said.

"The existing good relations will contribute to the stability and peace of the region," he added.

Replying to a question on his hopes for Umno, he said that he hoped that Umno would grow from strength to strength in terms of membership and also have a stronger unity for the betterment of the country and the people.

The Vietnam Communist Party was formed on Feb 3 1930 by the late Ho Chih Minh, the founding father of the country and now has more than two million members.

Secretary-general of the Syrian Baath Party, Abdollah Al-Ahmar described Umno as a unique party which has led Malaysia to become a new model society.

He told Bernama that efforts by Umno had enlightened society, making Malaysia an influential and respectable country, be it in South-East Asia or in the Muslim world.

The Baath party was invited for the first time to Umno's general assembly and Abdollah hoped that this would be the foundation for future

development between the two parties.

The relationship between Syria and Malaysia, he said, had grown stronger during the past few years.

He said that the role of Malaysia under Dr Mahathir was fundamental under the coalition such as the Non-Alligned Movement (NAM) or Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), in supporting the Arab and Islamic cause, especially the struggle of the Palestinians.

Describing Dr Mahathir as a great leader, he hoped that the new leadership would follow in his footsteps.

Meanwhile, Ung Huot of the Funcinpec said that the party had always admired Umno.

Ung Huot, who is former first prime minister of Cambodia, said that the Funcinpec could pick up some ideas from the assembly and learn about unity, the ability to implement policies and garnering support.

He was sad to see Dr Mahathir leaving as he had done a great job for Malaysia but would be happy to see the continuation of his policies by his successor.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka of the African National Congress, who is South Africa's Minister of Minerals and Energy, said that South Africa and Malaysia had a long-standing relationship in terms of solidarity and working together to address common problems.

She described Dr Mahathir as an outstanding leader and would be missed by many. South Africa was hopeful that the relationship would be enhanced under the new leadership.

-- BERNAMA

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