

13 AUG 2003

Gerakan-MCA

GERAKAN HOPES FOR WIN-WIN COOPERATION WITH MCA

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 13 (Bernama) -- Gerakan today expressed hope that its cooperation with MCA will be based on the true spirit of the Barisan Nasional (BN) and not cause it to lose out, its secretary-general, Chia Kwang Chye, said today.

He said in the past, cooperation between the two parties was good but Gerakan had "lost out" on several occasions, causing some unhappiness within the party.

"MCA should not forget the "history of Penang" when they lost all the seats in the 1990 general election and Gerakan came in to help the MCA to get more seats after that," he told reporters at Menara PGRM here today.

In 1990, MCA lost all their contested seats while another BN component Umno, won 12 seats and Gerakan won seven out of the 11 seats it contested.

Chia was asked on the level of cooperation with MCA after both parties pledged they would heed the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's advice to foster cooperation and mend fences to ensure BN of a convincing win in the next general election.

Chia said MCA should learn from the 1990 lesson because Gerakan, in wanting to have a stable state government in Penang, was willing to help MCA win more seats in the coming election.

He said Gerakan, between 1990 and 1995, retained all the MCA Councillors and Village, Security and Development Committee (JKKK) members throughout the state even though MCA did not have any representative in the state government at that time.

However, he said despite the goodwill and cooperation given by Gerakan, MCA decided to accept two of its state assemblymen, Lim Chin Aun (Bayan Lepas) and Lim Boo Chang (Datuk Keramat), as members three days after they won the seats under the Gerakan ticket in 1999.

He said another incident which made Gerakan unhappy was when Boo Chang and another MCA state assemblywoman, Tan Cheng Liang (Jawi), abstained from voting in the state legislative assembly against a DAP motion on the RM1.02 billion Penang Outer Ring Road (PORR) project in November as the move was seen as going against the BN spirit.

Chia said after suspending the two in December last year, the MCA Presidential Council announced last month that their suspension was lifted without informing the state BN chairman, Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

"It will take time to heal. How do you feel, three days after the general election, the two Lims were accepted by MCA as their members, two of them abstained and then the party decided to lift their suspension (without consulting the state BN chief)," he said.

Chia also said Gerakan was willing to "forgive and forget" for the sake of BN but MCA must also resolve their internal problem in Penang.

He said Gerakan did not want any future cooperation between the two parties being jeopardised by the internal problems within Penang MCA.

On the comment by Penang MCA deputy chief Datuk Koay Kar Huah yesterday that the Penang Gerakan was treating MCA like a third class party and had not given it the respect it deserved, Chia said he would leave it to the state Gerakan leader to comment.

However, he stressed the need for both parties to understand each other's role such as with MCA playing a bigger role at the federal level while Gerakan, since 1969, playing its role in Penang.

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