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Mahathir-Neocolonialism

GIVE RESOUNDING VICTORY TO BN IN THE NEXT ELECTION- DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, May 10 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister today urged Malaysians to give the Barisan Nasional a resounding victory in the next General Election so that the country will remain free and not fall prey to neocolonialism.

To protect this country from falling into the abyss of neocolonialism, the people should return the BN with a big majority so that a strong government could be formed, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He reminded Malaysians that foreign powers were trying to interfere in the internal affairs of this country under all types of pretexts.

This could be viewed as a neocolonialistic effort, said Dr Mahathir when opening the 57th MIC General Assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here. The MIC is a component party of the ruling Barisan Nasional of which Dr Mahathir is the Chairman.

A strong government would be able to handle current challenges and defend the country's independence from foreign threat, Dr Mahathir said.

Such a government would be able to administer the country well and ensure the country's continued development which the nation had been experiencing since independence.

Dr Mahathir added that only a strong government could guarantee that the country did not come under neocolonialism once more.

"These are challenging times. We need a very strong government to be able to head-off all those who are trying to undermine our country. We must remain united against any threat lest we should fall."

This is a different situation altogether from the immediate years after independence when one country did not interfere in the affairs of another.

"However gradually colonialists have reemerged and want to recolonise once more."

"Now they are accusing countries of not being democratic, not respecting basic human rights, of having oppressive regimes, not practising free trade and so on and hence they have a right to interfere," he said.

"So, the original belief that we should not interfere in the affairs of an independent country has been eroded, so much so, that now the belief is not only in interfering in our internal affairs but also forcing a regime change."

"They want to change our government, the people will not choose their government but the foreign power will decide who should be the government in a democratic country." he said.

Dr Mahathir said everyone had a role in strengthening the nation and ensuring political stability so that chaos would not prevail.

In view of this, BN component parties should avoid anything that would weaken them.

"We should close ranks. We must face the general election as one party and ensure victory for all BN candidates, irrespective of whether the candidate is from a majority party or a minority party," he said.

Dr Mahathir said a big majority was necessary in the general election to enable the government to take unpopular actions for the overall good of the country.

"We may have to take unpopular actions in the greater interest of the country. If we just follow the wishes of our supporters then we cannot develop the country. We cannot be a government that follows, it must also

be the government that leads," he said.

With a 50 per cent victory, the BN could still form the government but with such a slim majority the government would be at the mercy of its own party members.

"They will demand something for themselves and if this is not given, they will cross over to the opposition which will then have the majority and be able to form the government."

That was why in every election, the BN said it required a big majority to form a strong government which would not be at the mercy of anyone, the Prime Minister said.

The Prime Minister said the BN had 14 component parties and it would not collapse if one of the parties were to withdraw from the BN.

Dr Mahathir said the BN wished to preserve the present form of cooperation among the various races, which had been upheld for so long as it had a proven track record.

The BN's concept of cooperation differed from that in other countries where parties without the required majority after the election were under pressure to look for coalition partners to form a government.

In Malaysia the BN coalition was already in place before the general election based on its power-sharing concept.

This form of cooperation was important and significant because like in the case of Indians where they were not in the majority in any constituency but Indian candidates were still able to win and represent constituencies in the state assembly and Parliament with the support of other races from the other BN component parties.

This system had to be preserved as it was not only good for the minority race but also for the majority race in any constituency.

Even in Malay or Chinese majority areas, the BN could not be assured of victory if it were to depend on the support of only one race, Dr Mahathir said.

In a Malay majority area with both the government and opposition candidates from the Malay race, the votes could be split nearly 50-50.

"In such a situation it is the Non-Malay vote which will determine who is going to win. The Chinese and Malay vote will decide which candidate and from which party wins."

"This is our unique system...we invented it. No other country has done it although quite a few would like to learn from us. Hence it is very important we preserve our cooperation."

Although there had been much speculation about the election date, it was nevertheless important for all BN component parties to be ready for the general election.

On Education, Dr Mahathir said he was happy and proud that Malaysians accepted the importance of English and the government's decision to have schools teach science and mathematics in that language.

No other government gave such top priority to education like the Malaysian Government with about 30 per cent of the Budget being allocated to education and out of the one million odd civil servants, 300,000 were teachers.

Dr Mahathir congratulated the MIC as most of its office-bearers were returned unopposed reflecting agreement and consensus in the party.

"Without contests it does not mean the party is undemocratic as this is also a form of democracy," he said.

He said the peace achieved by Malaysia was not something easy as the country apart from having three major races also had 30 other ethnic groups with their own dialects and cultures.

The Prime Minister said that during the colonial era there was little development with most of the country's wealth taken back home by the

colonialists.

"They cleared hundreds of acres of forest to plant rubber and mine tin but then there was no talk about preserving the forests. They were busy chopping down trees and burning them, not even using them. All the wealth went to enrich the British," he said.

Dr Mahathir praised the early Indian settlers in this country who came to work in the rubber estates and later struggled along with other races for the country's independence.

"Many Indians died in order to prosper the then British Malaya... this is the role of the Indian race. They gave wealth to Malaysia and helped to achieve independence," he added.

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