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Abdullah-Mother

MOTHER'S ADVICE INFLUENCES MY WORK STYLE, SAYS ABDULLAH

By: R. Ravichandran

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 9 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi tonight said that his late mother's advice had largely influenced his style in carrying out his duties as Prime Minister.

He said the advice and reminders of his late mother, who passed away on Feb 2, were still fresh in his mind.

"Actually much of my mother's advice had influenced my style and relations with other people. Although my mother is no longer around, her advice and reminders are still fresh in my mind," he said in an exclusive interview with TV3 in conjunction with his first 100 days in office as the Prime Minister.

Abdullah, who was interviewed by TV3 journalist Fuad Rahman, said he greatly appreciated all his late mother's advice and reminders.

Abdullah's mother, Datuk Khailan Hassan, 78, died of old age.

Abdullah also disclosed that after assuming the Prime Minister's post on Oct 31, last year, he had to shoulder more responsibilities.

"There is really so much work for me to do. There are times when I have to make a decision which others can't. They make me realise that if I make a wrong decision, the people will suffer while a right decision will benefit the rakyat or people.

"That's the meaning of the burden of responsibility for me. I'm grateful that the decisions I made have been accepted by the majority of the people," he said.

Abdullah also said that he was sad that he could no longer meet his friends as easily as before he became the Prime Minister.

"This is bothering me and making it difficult for me. I feel sad that now I cannot see the people whom I normally see. So it's sad. Sometimes I just meet them for one or two minutes to find out how they are getting on. I entertain them if I have the time. But I never forget my friends," he said.

Abdullah said the policies formulated during the administration of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad would continue as usual, the only difference would be in terms of implementation.

"There is a difference in style...(but) the mission is the same. The style of activating the mission differs," he said.

On corruption, Abdullah said such practices could bring a lot of problems to the country, administration and also the private sector if they were left unchecked.

"But I feel all Malaysians acknowledge it (corruption) is bad and can lead to major problems...and poor image," he said.

Abdullah said if corruption were left unchecked, foreign investors would be deterred from investing here and entrepreneurs would not be keen to carry on their business.

The Prime Minister said the civil servants also supported his efforts at curbing corruption at all levels.

"I've not heard of anyone writing a letter of protest (on the efforts). In fact, they too agreed that the problem should be eliminated.

"What is most disheartening is when the (public) perception of corruption is so strong, the image of a particular department or agency becomes bad. They (civil servants) say if there is serious political commitment to check corruption, they have no problem in giving their support," he said.

Abdullah also said it would be meaningless if the country had first class facilities and infrastructure while the people's mind was third class.

"It means that the expenditure and resources spent to provide the infrastructure are not bringing the desired results...the human factor fails to bring the benefits expected," he said.

The Prime Minister said he was also worried about the present trend of rapid development which had made the people more individualistic.

"There are indications...for someone living in a big city, his neighbour is not the one living next door but possibly living 10km away from his house...his close neighbour appears to be non-existent. He doesn't care about the community in his neighbourhood," he said.

Abdullah said he could see the desire of the civil servants to improve the image of their department or agency by taking into consideration his suggestions such as the introduction of the forms for customers' feedback at the respective service counters.

"This is because they are the contact points between the department and the public," he said.

On the police force, Abdullah said public perception of the police was not encouraging although looking at the force objectively, they were carrying out their functions.

Abdullah said if the police totally failed to carry out their tasks, the people certainly would not be enjoying the peace prevailing in the country now.

"So the police are working...I also understand that police work is now more challenging compared to before...the cyber age, the technology used by criminals are also more sophisticated. So under the current situation, there are also commercial crimes being committed."

He said that was why police had to improve efficiency and capability in terms of equipment used and personal knowledge besides individual efficiency.

Abdullah said the establishment of the Royal Commission recently was aimed at making the force more capable and credible in tackling future problems.

Abdullah was also asked whether the appointment of Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak as Deputy Prime Minister had created problems within the party.

"There is no problem...No other groups tried to create problems...sometimes I did hear in the initial stage, but after several statements by Najib that he and I could work together and is loyal (to me)...anyone trying to instigate will fail, they were disappointed," Abdullah said.

On the situation in Kelantan, Abdullah, who is also acting Umno president, said the situation now was improving with the programmes carried out receiving good response from the people unlike in the past.

He said the situation for Umno and BN in Terengganu, however, was better than in Kelantan.

"So, BN's hopes of achieving bigger success is good," he said.

On environmental pollution, Abdullah said everyone must act to stop pollution.

He said cooperation between the state governments should also be enhanced.

On the increasing number of road accidents in the country, the Prime Minister said the solution to the problem largely depended on the human factor.

"Inefficient drivers...inconsiderate drivers who ignore regulations and the law. That's why we want to ensure that the drivers comply with traffic regulations," he said.

On the increasing number of violent crimes, Abdullah said there were certainly public anger over the incidents and they were calling for severe punishment as a deterrent.

"I tell the police that we can't be everywhere...police must act very fast...the offenders must be arrested as soon as possible and charged in court and sentenced. Only then will there be a deterrent and they (would be criminals) would feel afraid," Abdullah added.

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