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Ensure BN wins big, says Dr M

reports on "MIC General Assembly 2003" by Zubaidah Abu Bakar; M.K.
THE people must ensure the Barisan Nasional is returned to power with a big majority in the next general election so that the nation will be ruled by a strong Government capable of standing up to any attempt by foreign powers to re-colonise the country.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said threats by foreign powers were real and only a strong Government would be able to defend the country from falling prey to neo-colonialism.

"We need a very strong government to be able to tell those who try to undermine our independence that we will not tolerate it and we stand united against any attempt to subvert our independence."

Addressing the delegates at the opening of 57th MIC general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, Dr Mahathir who is also BN chairman, said the coalition, with its proven track record of maintaining political stability and bringing about continuous development in the country, was the only party capable of maintaining the country's independence.

"Only a strong Government can administer the country well and ensure the country's continued development," he added.

This is the 23rd and last MIC general assembly that Dr Mahathir opened. In October, he is stepping down as Prime Minister, Umno president and BN chairman.

Also present were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu and leaders of other BN parties.

Dr Mahathir said the present situation was far different from the days when the country achieved its independence when one country did not meddle in the internal affairs of another.

"But as time went by, the colonialists re-emerged and they want to colonise by giving many excuses.

"Now they are accusing countries of being undemocratic, not respecting human rights, having oppressive regimes and not having an open or transparent trading system.

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

"They want to change our government. It is not the people but the foreign powers who want to determine who should become government and ruler of an independent country. "If this happens, there will no longer be independence and we will be colonised again."

Reminding Malaysians that the country's strength could only be achieved through political stability, Dr Mahathir said everyone should play their role in ensuring that the country is free of chaos.

He said BN component parties should close ranks and avoid situations which could weaken them or the coalition and work to bring about resounding victories to all BN candidates in the general election.

Dr Mahathir said it was not important whether the general election is held this year or the next. What is important is that BN component parties be prepared.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir congratulated Samy Vellu, deputy MIC president Datuk S. Subramaniam and vice-presidents Datuk S. Veerasingam, G.

Palanivel and Tan Sri K.S. Nijhar for being returned uncontested.

He said appointing leaders without contest showed that there was consensus and that democracy prevailed in the political parties and also in the country.

Dr Mahathir said some people's view that it was undemocratic unless leaders were changed every now and then was not true.

"If the people want to have the same leader, well, he can stay on as a leader. If he wishes to retire, you must allow him to retire."