

Abdullah brings a fresh wind to Malaysia

The Star - 5/11/2007.

KUALA LUMPUR: Since taking over as Prime Minister three years ago, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi succeeded in bringing a new climate to the leadership and administration of the country encompassing domestic and international affairs, said Umno Information chief Senator Tan Sri Muhammad Muhamad Taib.

He said Abdullah had brought much openness and transparency to his administration, while on the international stage he had established greater rapport with world leaders, especially the superpowers.

"This new climate has spurred the economy, more so with new growth corridors and sectors created," he said at a forum held at the end of a national seminar entitled *Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's Three Years in Putrajaya: Trailblazing a Brighter Future for Malaysia* here yesterday.

Muhammad was among four panellists at the forum, which was chaired by Universiti Sains Malaysia vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dzulkifli Abdul Razak. The seminar was jointly organised by the university, Institut Sosial Malaysia, and Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute.

Muhammad, a former Selangor menteri besar, said Abdullah could lead the nation well because he had full support at all levels, the Cabinet, Umno, component parties in the Barisan Nasional

coalition and the people at large.

"Wherever in the world, leaders are bound to have some weaknesses. That's a norm. But to say that there is widespread opposition to his leadership, I disagree," he said, adding that Abdullah's leadership style fitted in well with the prevailing situation in the country and the world.

"The Cabinet is solidly behind him if compared to the time Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah mounted a challenge against Dr Mahathir who was just in his fifth year as prime minister. Half the Cabinet supported Tengku Razaleigh."

"I notice Abdullah is very firm in determining the direction of the country. If some people say he has lost direction, I disagree. Abdullah is very clear in where he wants to go," he said.

The chairman and chief executive officer of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies Datuk Seri Mohamed Jawhar Hassan said that it might be too early to evaluate Abdullah's performance as he had been at the helm for only 38 months, but it needed to be done as democracy demanded so.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Azmi Khalid, who closed the seminar, urged all Malaysians to give their full support to Abdullah to take the nation to greater heights.

— Bernama