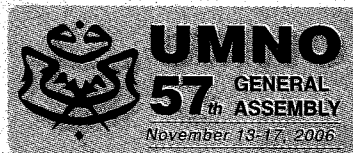


Mukhriz: Nothing new in speech

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DATUK Mukhriz Mahathir said he was a "little bit" disappointed with the presidential speech, claiming it offered nothing new.

"I think it's an address he delivered last year. I was hoping for something new. Perhaps, he has other ideas.

"We were hoping that there would be some kind of attempt for reconciliation, some attempt to specifically answer the questions," he said, when met by reporters.

On whether his views were being shaped by that of his father, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Mukhriz said: "I guess I am not just obliged to support my father. I believe 100% what he (Dr Mahathir) says and the way he feels about things."

Mukhriz said they wanted answers so that they could move on and support every decision the Abdullah-led Government made.

"We are open to be convinced. We are waiting for answers. We are waiting for good explanations why things are. But until now — it's been six to eight months — we are still waiting."

Mukhriz said the mere mention of his mother's (Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali's) name got a huge round of applause from the floor.

"Imagine if my father had attended this meeting or if his name was mentioned. We don't know how the

delegates would react.

"So, maybe that's the reason why his name was kept out in most part of the (Abdullah's) speech.

On the gesture made by the Prime Minister asking delegates to pray for the good health of Dr Mahathir, Mukhriz said this was appropriate and sincere.

Datuk Paduka Marina Mahathir when contacted after the opening said that there was less *semangat* (enthusiasm) compared to previous assemblies.

"For me, there was a lot more *rahar* previously," she said, adding that she attended the opening to accompany her mother.