

Soros wants PM out and Anwar freed

WASHINGTON: International financier George Soros has called for the ouster of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the release of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

In remarkably blunt comments, he said Malaysians should turn against Dr Mahathir because his policies aimed to keep him in office and benefit his political allies.

"He is actually doing the right thing for himself because he is preserving himself in power, and he puts himself in a position where he can bail out his cronies who are in financial difficulties, including his son and so on," Soros said.

"So I think what needs to happen is he needs to be removed from power," Soros said at the Johns Hopkins University here.

Soros, chairman of Soros Fund Management and adviser to the Quantum Fund, argued that the control measures would deepen the country's financial crisis.

Dr Mahathir has accused Soros and other speculators of attacking Malaysia's currency, causing the country's worst economic slump in decades.

"I hope that Anwar will be either let out of jail or if he's put in jail, the public opinion is going to turn against Mahathir," Soros said, when asked by a reporter who should replace

Dr Mahathir.

Soros was invited to speak about his new book, *The Crisis of Global Capitalism* but was asked to comment on economic conditions around the world

He also accused the International Monetary Fund of being part of the problem facing the world financial system.

In Kuala Lumpur, Umno Youth called on Malaysians to be cautious of the intentions of Soros.

Its assistant secretary Zulkifli Alwi said Malaysians must "realise the machinations of greedy and inconsiderate capitalists like Soros."

He said they did not have any qualms about impoverishing millions, including those in poor countries, out of sheer greed to make billions of dollars for themselves.

"Certainly, Soros, together with other currency speculators, is guilty of robbing us Malaysians of the prosperity that we have enjoyed previously by attacking the ringgit and causing the current economic slump," Zulkifli said in a statement yesterday.

He said the remarks had again portrayed Soros for what he was — an arrogant and inconsiderate profiteer who took it upon himself to decide the destiny of Malaysians.

Zulkifli, who is also Barisan Nasional Youth

secretary, said Soros' call for Malaysians to turn against Dr Mahathir seemed to imply all means possible to achieve that goal.

Umno Youth seriously doubted that Soros was in a position to comprehend the views of Malaysians, he said.

"How can he possibly do this when he hardly comprehends the background, history, culture, religion, ethnicity and socio-economic problems of Malaysians?"

Zulkifli also said that the majority of Malaysians were fed up of tiresome foreigners who still carry the baggage of history and must preach and condescend.

Gerakan Youth chief Datuk Chang Ko Youn said Soros had a personal grudge against Dr Mahathir because the latter exposed his financial speculations and the immense damage he did to the global economy.

People's Progressive Party president Datuk M. Kayveas also criticised Soros for his statement.

"The PPP urges all Malaysians to analyse the involvement of foreigners like Al Gore and Soros.

"These are not simple statements on democracy but clearly attempts to interfere in the domestic affairs of Malaysia," he said.