

06/12/1998

We do not need Soros to teach us, say leaders

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Non-governmental organisations, businessmen and an economist today joined politicians in a chorus of criticism against currency trader George Soros.

Umno secretary-general Datuk Seri Sabbaruddin Chik asked Soros to leave the management of Malaysia to Malaysians.

"I think we can manage better without him. His statements have no bearing on us."

MCA vice-president Datuk Chua Jui Meng reminded Soros that he had made the markets immoral through his speculation and manipulation of the region's currencies.

"Malaysia does not need a person like Soros to come and tell us how to run our country. We have run our country pretty well ... we know what is best for us. We have achieved in 40 years what the US took 200 years to do," Chua, who is also Health Minister, said.

MCA secretary general Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh told Soros to, "Go fly a kite".

Umno supreme council member Datuk Ibrahim Ali said he was certain Soros' statement was made out of frustration with Malaysia's implementation of exchange rate controls which have curbed ringgit speculation.

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Ibrahim Saad said, "Who is Soros to decide on our leadership and who is he to call on people to resign or be expelled?"

Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia said in a statement it totally rejected Soros and his vengeful remarks against Dr Mahathir. "Soros has no right to decide on who Malaysians should elect as Prime Minister or any other position in the Government," the statement said.

Gerakan vice president Dr Goh Cheng Teik said "The people should now stand up and show the foreign agents who are trying to stir up problems that they stand united behind Dr Mahathir."

Gerakan central committee member Dr S. Vijayaratnam, said Malaysians should ignore the remarks.

"The word 'ouster' has dangerous connotations. Does it imply revolution? We are confident his comments will not deter the view of the majority of Malaysians who want peace and stability."

"Statements like the ones made by Soros and Al Gore reinforce suspicions that there may be sinister forces outside the nation which are bent on destroying the fabric of politics and society in this country."

In Alor Star, Sports and Youth Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said Malaysians should disregard Soros' statement because it was made by a person who was disappointed that the Malaysian economy had started to recover.

In Georgetown, Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon said it was inappropriate that Soros meddled in the politics of this country.

In Kuantan, Pahang Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohd Khalil Yaakob said Soros' statement was made in vengeance against Dr Mahathir.

In Malacca, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abu Zahar Isnin said "I think he does not know that the present Government is chosen by the people, nobody else."

Umno supreme council member Datuk Wira Mohd Ali Rustam, who is also State Umno liaison deputy chief, said the remarks proved that Soros "is behind the reformasi movement".

In Kuching, Bernama reports that Industrial Development Minister Datuk Abang Johari Tun Openg described Soros' remarks as rude.

In Ipoh, Perak Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib said that it was best for Malaysians to ignore the statement.

People's Progressive Party president Datuk M. Kayveas said Soros had no business to become a political consultant for Malaysians and his statement was uncalled for.

In Kuala Terengganu, State Umno Youth assistant secretary Din Adam said Soros had no right to tell Malaysians who should be the country's leader.

"His statement shows that Soros is on a vendetta rampage," he added.

Institute of Strategic and International Studies deputy director-general Dr Zainal Aznam Yusof said Soros seemed to be overstepping the boundary between finance and economics and trespassing into politics.

"I think this is inappropriate and unwelcome," he said.

While everyone had the right to comment, Zainal Aznam said they should at least know what they were talking about.

The Malay Chamber of Commerce, in a statement issued by its executive director Mustafa Mohamed Najimudin, said Soros "has overstepped all boundaries of courtesy and manners, and it clearly shows disrespect to both the people and country.

"His statement is subversive and destructive, as it calls for the removal of the Malaysian Government, which was democratically elected, and the derailment of the judicial process."

Mustafa said the statement, together with the statement made by US Vice President Al Gore recently, raised the question of whether there was a conspiracy between the the US Government and currency speculators to replace the leadership of Malaysia.

"This Chamber therefore calls all Malaysians to unite to defend the dignity and sovereignty of our country," he added.

Malaysian Youth Council president Saifuddin Abdullah said : "He has no locus standi whatsoever to ask Malaysians to oust a democratically elected Prime Minister."

"He can't even differentiate between the time when Anwar was detained under the ISA and now, when he is going through the judicial process."

Cuepacs president N. Sivasubramaniam said Soros' statement proved that he had a hidden agenda to undermine the country's political system.

Suara Rakyat Malaysia co-ordinator Elizabeth Wong said everyone should have a right to make comments and criticise. "This applies to people from both inside or outside the country."

She said Soros' comments should be taken calmly and "we should be above all this."

(END)