

Ku Li:** Foreigners have no right to **interfere

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'People free to vote opposition candidates'

By KUSUTHAN
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KOTA BARU: Foreigners have no right to interfere in Malaysian politics as the country practices a vibrant democracy which enables the people to vote for parties of their choice.

State Umno liaison committee chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah said this had been proven by the fact that Kelantan was ruled by an opposition party and the presence of many opposition members in the Dewan Rakyat.

"I myself have won in Gua Musang on an opposition ticket in the 1990 and 1995 general elections and subsequently in a by-election after

the 1995 victory was declared null and void," he told reporters yesterday at his Palm Manor residence here.

"If the people are free to vote opposition candidates, what is the right of foreigners to interfere, especially in a sovereign country like Malaysia?" he asked.

He was commenting on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement in New York on Tuesday that there was a high level of foreign interference in the run-up to Malaysia's 10th general election.

Tengku Razaleigh said Parti Keadilan Nasional's move to spread its message through the World Wide Web

was meant to influence foreigners to interfere in the country's affairs.

He said it showed that opposition parties lacked support to defeat Barisan Nasional in the election.

Relating his own experience when heading Parti Melayu Semangat 46, Tengku Razaleigh said he did not seek foreigners' support when contesting against Barisan in the 1990 and 1995 general elections.

"The support only came from other opposition parties," he said.

He said Malaysia was worried about foreigners' interference as it had resulted in chaos and deaths in a neigh-

bouring country.

On another matter, Tengku Razaleigh said he initiated the setting up of Bank Islam when he was finance minister and chairman of Islamic Development Bank which is based in Jeddah.

Replying to a reporter's query that supporters of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had claimed that Anwar was instrumental in setting up bank, he said this was not true.

"I invited Prince Mohamad Al-Malik Faisal of Saudi Arabia to visit the country as he had set up such banks in Geneva, Khartoum and other Islamic countries such as Pakistan," he said.