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The free, united way to success

A MANIFESTO is a public declaration of policy and aims issued before an election by the outgoing government, contending political parties or cobbled coalitions and independent candidates. Subject to the piercing jet of scrutiny many, if not most, transpire to be mere pamphlets that detail little more than promises. Not so that unveiled by the chairman of the Barisan Nasional, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Sunday night.

It is a document that records past achievements forged on solid anvils, well and clearly encapsulated in two words: freedom and unity. Both have been the foundations on which the edifice of success, (another simple word), has been built.

All three words, concatenated, formed the metaphorical platform on which the past governments, comprising initially a coalition of three of major political parties and now of 14, have addressed the electorate to return them to office in each of the last several general elections. Now as it forays into the hustings again, the Barisan seeks yet again an endorsement of its commitment to ensure continuity of freedom, unity and success.

As Dr Mahathir said, the BN presents a record card that shows the benefits which have devolved on the people and the country. Results achieved through the smart partnership of co-operation, consensus, tolerance and a common identity. So now it is up to the people to make their choice, sans compulsion or threat. This is BN's way to obtain a mandate.

Voters are free to exercise their right just as the country has been free for the last 42 years to map out the road to progress. Without the yoke of foreign dictates, each subsequent government elected by the people, comprising representatives of citizens and serving the country, embarked on a journey to forge unity among the diverse ethnic groups and map out programmes that yielded in an enviable economic growth for the country and betterment of the quality of life.

Indeed, it is freedom, the inalienable right of all free people and all free governments that enabled ours to chart its own course to steer the country out of the troubled waters of the 1997-1998 recession which almost crippled the country economically.

Though the measures initiated by the Government were much maligned it has been since been endorsed that our way was the effective solution to our economic and monetary ills.

The past is history as are the past achievements of the BN Government. And the challenges in the new millennium are formidable. For one, globalisation and borderless trade that would bring in its wake severe cuts on tariff protection in the international market are problems our future governments will have to address. But they are not insurmountable obstacles that a leadership such as provided by the BN cannot hurdle, provided it is returned to office with a majority which strengthens its sinews to lead the country to continued freedom, unity, progress and prosperity.

That ultimately is the pledge in the BN's manifesto. All it asks of the electorate is to make the right choice, to continue to be together with the BN Government, "for the sake of the future of the country, race and (all) Malaysians". No manifesto by any other party, coalition or candidate spells out the options facing voters in this 10th general election of the country in a more simple language.

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