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Colonialised mentality tends to parrot criticisms, says Dr M

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JOHOR BARU, Thurs. - A colonialised mentality continues to impede Malaysia's progress, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

Despite achievements since Independence, many Malaysians continued to believe that Europeans are superior, he said in his speech accepting an honorary doctorate in management and engineering today conferred by Universiti Teknologi Malaysia at its convocation.

"Every time we plan something that draws the criticism of Europeans and their media, those with colonialised thinking tend to parrot the same criticisms."

The former Prime Minister warned that this form of mental colonialism, designed to subjugate the people, was more effective than the physical territorial control practised in the past by European nations.

"It is true that they can no longer directly colonialise us, but there is an English saying that 'there are many ways to skin a cat'," he said.

"They have found other ways to colonialise us and they are now resorting to manipulating Malaysians who have yet to free themselves from mental colonisation."

Dr Mahathir said these Malaysians have been influenced to form non-governmental organisations to support their foreign counterparts who loathed seeing the country progress.

"The fact that these people are not even aware that they are being used by these new colonialists just shows how effective it is to colonise their minds," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the country's progress would have been more rapid and achieved at a much lower cost if some quarters did not support the agenda of foreigners and their media.

Pointing to the North-South Expressway as an example, he said the project could have been completed before 1980 at only RM6 billion if not for the opposition by so many people who believed that there was no need for the sophisticated road system.

"When we finally built the highway, the cost increased so much that the Government was forced to provide financial assistance," he said.

Other projects to upgrade the country's infrastructure and industries were similarly opposed on grounds that they would be "unsuccessful, totally unnecessary or environmentally unsound".

"To convince those among us whose minds are still being colonised, they (the new colonialists) invented the word 'mega project' and this word has been gleefully accepted by our NGOs," he said.

"Everything done to hasten the country's progress was labelled as a mega project and was opposed by the NGOs and even sometimes by the local media.

"These (objections) were greeted with a round of applause by the media of our former colonial masters to celebrate the fact that their mental colonialism strategy was indeed a success."

Dr Mahathir said locals who opposed the country's development projects, along with their foreign backers, had conveniently omitted the fact that the so-called mega projects had been constructed without compromising the standard of living in rural areas.

"The fact is, after we had constructed all these projects which had been labelled as 'mega', Malaysia had not gone bankrupt nor are we begging for alms from anybody. Instead, our finances have become much stronger compared to other developing countries or in fact even among some of the

developed countries," he added.