

**DAP: BN opiates citizens to hide its sins**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**May 20, 2011**

The DAP continued to harp on the "subsidy opium" notion raised by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, saying the BN government has fed Malaysians with "opium" over the decades to hide the impact of its massive corruption, cronyism, leakages and maladministration.

National DAP publicity secretary Tony Pua described BN as the "drug pusher" that has fed "opium" to Malaysians in increasing doses over the years to mask the fact that the Malaysian economy has been unable to grow at the necessary pace and competitiveness.

"As a result, the people are unable to increase their income at a pace faster than the rapidly rising cost of living.

Hence, the BN government uses 'opium' to keep the general populace in an artificial state of bliss and ignorance, so that Malaysians are stuck in a middle income trap and rising income inequality," the MP for Petaling Jaya Utara (left) said in a statement today.

On May 17, Najib told an audience at Oxford University's Centre for Islamic Studies: "Subsidies as a whole are like opium. Once you take opium it's hard to kick the bad habit; once you provide subsidies it's hard to take them away without some political cost."

According to media reports, the government is mulling to increase RON95 petrol price and electricity tariff.

In his statement, Pua accused BN of weakening the nation's economic competitiveness through inefficient and ineffective policies, hare-brained projects and rampant corruption, while the population was induced with a "feel good" factor over the past two decades.

He cited the multi-billion ringgit Port Klang Free Zone scandal and the RM888 billion capital flight out of the country from 2000 to 2008, which was announced by the US-based financial watchdog Global Financial Integrity (GFI).

Pua explained that the increasing production of oil and gas as well as rising international oil prices had allowed BN to deceive the people with subsidies all these years.

### **Plundering nation's wealth the real problem**

However, as a result of extravagant and unproductive government expenditure over the past two decades, the BN government now finds itself having difficulty reducing the budget deficit and feeding its cronies, while continuing to subsidise the people at the same time.

This subsidy phenomena, he said, was not the real problem faced by the Malaysian economy: the real problem is the plundering and pilfering of the country's wealth by the BN government and its crony business interests.

"Therefore, even if the 'opium' addiction is removed, the plight of the economy will continue because all that's saved from the 'opium' will still be pilfered away."

The only way to revive the country's economy, according to Pua, is for the BN government to place the interests of the citizens above that of its cronies and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its expenditures, as well as to take pro-active measures to improve transparency and accountability to reduce corruption and leakages.

"Without these key measures, removing the 'opium' addiction will only be a short-term measure that will

not lead us to become a high-income nation," he warned.

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