

Dr M: Soros wants to install puppet as PM

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By Nigel Aw

Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad claimed that American billionaire George Soros was funding local NGOs in an attempt to install a prime minister that would do his bidding.

"He wants to control our politics and name his choice as prime minister.

"He knows this when he donates, supposedly it is to promote democracy and freedom - so apparently we do not have freedom here," he said when approached by journalists in Kuala Lumpur this morning.

Ultimately, Mahathir adds, Soros' objective is to institute regime change in the country.

"His purpose is to have a prime minister that he can control, he wants regime change in Malaysia," he said.

Asked if the NGOs and news portals such as Malaysiakini were part of this "conspiracy", Mahathir replied: "Semua lah (All of them)".

Mahathir spoke to reporters briefly today at a function in Kuala Lumpur before rushing off to catch a flight to the United States to receive an award.

Major newspapers such as Utusan Malaysia, Berita Harian and New Straits Times had front-page reports claiming that US-based National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and other international organisations were funding local NGOs and Malaysiakini.

From enemies to buddies

A similar report was aired during prime-time on TV3, suggesting that foreign funding, including from Soros' Open Society Foundation, was intended for civil society groups to topple legitimate governments around the world and replace them with client proxies.

However, Malaysiakini CEO Premesh Chandran had said the funding was for the Southeast Asia Centre for E-Media (Seacem) and various projects to promote press freedom.

Soros was once public enemy number one, blamed by Mahathir for causing the devaluation of the ringgit during the Asian financial crisis in 1997.

What followed was a round of name calling, with Mahathir labeling Soros a "moron" and the latter retorted by calling the then premier a "menace to his country".

Nearly a decade later, Mahathir changed his position on Soros and befriended him, first by exchanging letters and later meeting him in Kuala Lumpur.

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