

Dr M on 'getting rid of a mosquito'
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Dr Mahathir Mohamad today defended the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition but has again slammed his handpicked successor - this time using the analogy regarding the burning of a mosquito net.

The 82-year-old former premier, who could be making a comeback to Umno after leaving the party early this year in protest against Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's leadership, argued that Barisan Nasional is still the best choice.

According to him, the March 8 'debacle' was caused by the dissatisfaction towards the BN leadership rather than the ruling coalition itself.

"The BN coalition is still the best political party in Malaysia. It gave due consideration to the problems of all the Malaysian parties and the races they represent. And there can be no denying that BN had built the Malaysia that we see today.

"It would be a pity if, as the Malay saying goes, 'we burn the mosquito net because of one mosquito'.

"What needs to be done is to get rid of the mosquito but continue to use the net," penned Mahathir in his latest blog posting.

What went wrong?

The former Umno president said there is a tendency these days to condemn the BN as being ineffective and an obstacle to the modern concepts of a free democratic government.

The miserable performance of the BN in the March elections, he added, is attributed by foreign observers as evidence of a wind of change, as a rejection of race-based politics of the past.

"They believe that the Malay, Chinese and Indian voters voted for a change to a more liberal regime.

abdullah ahmad badawi pm mahathir quits umno pc 190508 01"I have explained in a previous article that the debacle suffered by the BN was due to the voters' disgust with the leadership of Abdullah."

In examining the course of Malaysian politics leading up the 2008 general election, Mahathir said for almost half a century the Alliance/BN governments had the full support of the people of all races.

"There were ups and downs but the BN would invariably win elections with a 2/3 majority in Parliament. Other than Kelantan, the states had always elected BN governments. Sabah for a time was not with BN.

"In the 1999 elections, Malay support of the BN was eroded because of sympathy for Anwar Ibrahim. But the Chinese strongly backed the BN to give it its usual 2/3 majority and

opposition stalwarts like Karpal Singh and Lim Kit Siang, who had never been defeated before, lost their seats.

"Had the trend been towards change and rejection of the BN the 2004 election would show this. But far from being rejected the BN swept through with its best ever result, getting 9/10th of the seats in Parliament, regaining Terengganu and almost capturing Kelantan."

umno bn pak lah liow tiong lai event permatang pauh by election 240808 05However, the 2008 election saw the ruling coalition losing its 2/3 majority and four states in addition to Kelantan.

"What happened between 2004 and 2008?" asked Mahathir. "Can it be that after almost 50 years of supporting race-based politics the voters have decided to reject it and opt for non-racial politics?"

"Have the people in the kampong suddenly yearned for more liberalism? If so why did they give strong support to PAS, a race-religious party which is anything but liberal?"

"Maybe the ordinary Chinese are more sophisticated than the rural Malays. Maybe they have now rejected racial politics. But as far as can be made out the Chinese are upset over the economic situation."

"Even hawkers and small traders; the subcontractors, the retail shops owners are unhappy with the government. They are however very cautious about criticising Abdullah but when pressed they admit that they wanted Abdullah out but dared not say it aloud for fear of being accused of rejecting Malay leadership."

"They also worry about their businesses being singled out for some unpleasant treatment like being investigated by the Inland Revenue Board."

Therefore unable to do anything else, Mahathir said, they cast their votes for the opposition and dealt a blow to BN.

'Poor leadership'

"The votes that the opposition parties got were not due to a desire to replace the BN with the unstructured Pakatan Rakyat. They were protest votes. But is it protest against the BN party? Is it a rejection of race-based politics? I don't think so.

"It is a protest against the poor leadership of the BN, rather than the BN itself. The people saw a BN leader who was indecisive, unable to deal with the increasing cost of living, flip-flopping, unable to stimulate the economy and above all is known for putting his family's interest above that of state."

khairy abdullah badawi umno 200607"Everyone knows about the 4th Floor and the role of (Abdullah's son-in-law and Umno Youth deputy chief) Khairy Jamaluddin's cronies in determining policies and deciding on the business activities of the country."

"People consider these arrogant young people as contributing to the poor performance of the prime minister."

Since the March 8 polls, Abdullah has come under increasing pressure to vacate his post.

Recently, the premier announced that he would step down in 2010 and hand over the reins to his deputy, Najib Razak.

However, Umno vice-president Muhyiddin Yassin on Wednesday called on Abdullah to step down earlier.

To add salt to the injury, Anwar - who has returned to Parliament after a 10-year hiatus - has constantly threatened to stage a political coup with Barisan MPs crossing over to the opposition alliance Pakatan Rakyat.

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