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Dr M: Think twice before voting opposition

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LESSONS FROM THE PAST: 'Country may be destroyed if Anwar in power'

KUALA LUMPUR

FORMER prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad cautioned the people about giving the opposition a five-year trial mandate to rule the country, saying that it was a dangerous move because many things could be destroyed.

He said the many changes promised by the opposition, such as free university education and abolition of highway tolls, would fail like the socialists and communists, who had tried the welfare state idea in the past.

"Malaysia has no ideology. But the reality is that the government needs money in order to develop the country and to subsidise the living cost of the people.

"But when a government goes taxes, tolls and fees, it will have less money. But it will have to spend more on running and maintaining utilities, expressways, schools, operational and development cost, pensions and so on," he said in a blog posting yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said it was okay to borrow if the money was invested and gave a return.

"But borrowing money in order to just spend will lead to non-payment of debts. That's what happened to Greece. It's bankrupt now. The whole of Europe cannot

put it back together again."

Dr Mahathir said the people should look at Barisan Nasional's record in ruling the country since independence and compare it with other countries, which gained independence at the same time or the West.

"They are in deep financial trouble and, try as they might, they have not been able to overcome the crisis."

He said that during the 1997-1998 financial crisis, then deputy prime minister and finance minister (Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim) tried the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) solution without the IMF's loans. Banks and companies faced the threat of bankruptcy, arising from non-performing loans, which raised the cost of imports and cost of living.

"The track record of the finance minister then was bad, although there is a fondness of claiming success brought about by other people as his success.

Now, as leader of the opposition, he is claiming that he would bring about change. What good change did he introduce when he was in the government?"

Dr Mahathir said that Anwar was only interested in getting up the leadership ladder of Umno in order to become prime minister, adding, "How he achieved his ob-

jective does not bear scrutiny".

He cited some of United States President Barack Obama's promises in the presidential campaign four years ago, which he failed to keep, including closing down the Guantanamo detention camp, stopping trials of detainees by military courts, and pulling out US troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Instead of pulling out from Iraq and Afghanistan, he (Obama) approved a 'surge' in the troops sent to these areas. Later, he pulled out some troops but American soldiers are still in the two countries."

The former prime minister said it was easy to make promises during election campaigns, but keeping them was a different matter.

"The best hope is that people's memory is short. They would normally forget the promises. Now the opposition has copied Obama and is promising change.

"Already we see this person (Anwar), who claims to fight for free speech, suing and resorting to the courts to shut up his critics. Other powers of the government will be similarly abused. Nepotism and cronyism will be employed as indeed they are in the party he now heads."

He again asked Malaysians to look at BN's track record after 55 years of ruling the country and stressed that the people must not allow themselves to be hoodwinked as he was by the appearance of religious piety in the past. **Bernamea**

*"What good change did he (Anwar) introduce when he was in the government?"
Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad*