

Newspaper	NEW STRAITS TIMES
Date	21 JULY 2017

'DR M'S APPOINTMENT A BETRAYAL TO REFORMASI MOVEMENT'

NST- 21/7/2017
Pg. 8

Opposition pact may have to answer for his past scandals, warns Suaram adviser

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TUN Dr Mahathir Mohamad's appointment as the chairman of the pro-tem Pakatan Harapan (PH) has been described as one of the biggest betrayals to the Reformasi movement, according to a human rights activist.

Suaram adviser Dr Kua Kia Soong said that it was bad enough that the opposition parties made an alliance with the former prime minister, who he deemed as an "unrepentant for-

mer autocrat", but the appointment itself was a betrayal to the movement which was mobilised to oppose Dr Mahathir.

He said an outcome of Dr Mahathir's appointment as chairman of PH would be the need for the opposition pact to answer for all his past purported scandals.

"PH must be prepared to answer for the RM30 billion in foreign exchange losses during his term," he said.

"It is not as if the former prime minister had sincerely become a 'born-again democrat' by showing a sliver of contrition, but up to now, he has not," Kua said in a statement.

Kua, a former Internal Security Act detainee, said Dr Mahathir was also not sorry for Operasi Lalang detention in 1987.

The crackdown saw 106 politicians being held without trial.

He added that the former premier was also unapologetic for the political conspiracy against his former deputy, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Kua also claimed that Dr Mahathir had squandered more than RM100 billion in financial scandals during his term in office.

"The litany of woes inflicted under Dr Mahathir's rule has been well-documented and every community has its story," he added.



Dr Kua Kia Soong

Kua also said other acts of Dr Mahathir include displacing some 10,000 indigenous people from their ancestral area in Bakun in order to make way for what he deemed as the leader's grandiose dam project.

The project was later suspended during the financial crisis of 1998.

He also drew attention to the plight of the then Indian plantation workers whose communities he alleged were destroyed through Dr Ma-

hathir's neo-liberal capitalist policies and which in turn had forced them to become urban settlers.

The former one term DAP

Petaling Jaya member of parliament also blamed Dr Mahathir for the needless communal controversies created around vernacular education in the past, including the Unified Examination Certificate issue in 1975, the National Culture Policy, the unqualified school administrators sent to Chinese schools in 1987.

"He is also the top dog in the new 'Pribumi' party which is only open to 'Pribumis' no less," he said while referring to Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia, which is chaired by Dr Mahathir.

"You have to be a "Zombie Democrat" to accept such a party into the coalition that is supposed to embody the Reformasi Movement!

"Do the PH leaders still remember what their Reformasi programme stands for?"