

WHAT do you do when you are faced with an insurmountable obstacle on a road you're driving on? Of course, you may want to swerve to the right or left but if these options are not available, you just stop, make a U-turn and look for alternatives ways to reach your destination.

This obviously is a no-brainer, it's not rocket science. But when something like this is done as a political manoeuvre, it does not go down well with anyone, no matter their political affiliations. Even if it is done to save a nation from being destroyed.

The opposition was against the ratification of the International Criminal Court's Rome Statute yet, strangely, when Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced that Malaysia would be backing out of signing the statute, they were the ones mocking him.

Shouldn't they be thanking Dr Mahathir and Pakatan instead? After all, they actually got what they wanted.

So I have this strange feeling that they were deeply disappointed in Dr Mahathir's decision, as he did not want a situation in which millions of Malays/Muslims converged in Kuala Lumpur, which could have led to other disastrous consequences.

Personally, it would indeed be unsettling to see a million or more racially- and religiously-charged Malays out in the streets protesting in the name of defending their race, religion and nation.

So those castigating Dr Mahathir over the Cabinet's reversal of the ratification - and this includes those backing him - should cease their self-righteous scolding. They should realise that the consequences would have been dire indeed if the government had gone ahead.

The open show of dissent we have seen appears to be a mere tip of the iceberg after the disturbing revelation by Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah of the actual reason for the government's decision.

The minister, who is known for

# A disturbing and deep state of fear

A minister's revelation of possible infiltration of state apparatus by a 'deep state' is troubling indeed.



The U-turn: Dr Mahathir has said that the government was 'forced' to back out of signing the Rome Statute. Could a 'deep state' really have pushed through this U-turn?

his calm and sensible nature, shockingly said that there most likely existed a "deep state" which had used the Rome Statute controversy to instigate royalty, government institutions and the masses.

He said history has shown that a coup d'etat is a common reaction to democratic advancement and the public rising up following an election, and it is usually instigated by the "deep state".

"There was the possibility of the issue being manipulated to the extent that people go to the streets, moved by the 'deep state' and certain apparatus," Saifuddin reportedly said.

This should wake Malaysians out of our political slumber, as we are

now in uncharted waters.

A deep state, also known as a state within a state, is defined as a form of clandestine government made up of hidden or covert networks of power operating independently of a nation's political leadership, in pursuit of its own agenda and goals.

Examples include organs of state, such as the armed forces, or public authorities like intelligence agencies, police, secret police, administrative agencies, and government bureaucracy.

A deep state can also take the form of entrenched, career civil servants acting in a non-conspiratorial manner to further their own interests.

It can operate in opposition to the agenda of elected officials by obstructing, resisting, and subverting their policies, conditions and directives.

Thus a massive turnout of protestors, which obviously the deep state would have hoped for, could have created a conducive environment for certain powers to step in and alter the course of the nation in the name of race and religion.

The Umno/PAS leadership were probably waiting to pounce and change the government by removing their arch nemesis, Dr Mahathir, and what they propagandise as the "DAP-led Chinese government".

Going by Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob's open call for a PAS/Umno "jihad" to topple the Pakatan government, the opposition is desperate and is willing to risk anything to get back into power.

The leaked contents of a 10-page summary prepared by four Malay academics for the Council of Rulers gave us an inkling of the existence of a deep state. They argued against supporting the Rome Statute.

They claimed that becoming a signatory to this instrument would make the King liable to prosecution at the Hague-based court in his role as supreme commander of the armed forces.

However, Constitutional law expert Shad Saleem Faruqi, a Universiti Malaya professor (and *The Star* columnist), debunked that theory, saying the King, as a

Constitutional monarch, would not be held liable for any war crimes because he only acts upon the advice of the prime minister and the Cabinet.

"The person who would be liable would be the prime minister and the armed forces chief," he has said.

But that aside, why would someone in power fear the statute if he would not be committing the four crimes that the International Criminal Court could act on, namely genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crimes of aggression?

This argument reminded me of what the PAS leadership said a few years ago when pushing to implement hudud laws. It said, if you have not done anything wrong or if you have no bad intentions, there is nothing to fear.

The Rome Statute was designed to save people's lives, dignity, property, and even religion, not to take away anyone's rights or privileges. In the eyes of the world, we have now lost the moral compass to condemn any crime against humanity, like the persecution of the Rohingyas in Myanmar and condition of the Palestinian people.

Some might not realise it but we are now living in a nation where politics has replaced philosophy and reason. Of course there are many men of principle in all political parties but is there a party of principle? So we are forced to vote for a coalition which is more principled and less corrupt than the other.

For us to grow as a Malaysian nation, let's not seek the Pakatan answer or the Umno or PAS answer but the right answer. Let us not seek to fix the blame for the past. Let us accept our own responsibility for the future. And the future depends on what we do today.

Coming back to U-turns, don't ever rule out this option in your life, because one day you will need to use it for a noble and morally right reason, as our visionary doctor in the house did over the ratification of the Rome Statute.