

Pakatan accuses Najib of pushing 'Bush policies in disguise'
The Malaysian Insider
October 17, 2011
By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 17 — The federal opposition accused Datuk Seri Najib Razak today of practising "Bush policies in disguise" by implementing the "trickle-down economics" of George W. Bush, the last Republican president of the United States.

Yesterday, the prime minister called the opposition's shadow budget a "right-wing Republican" budget that failed to address the needs of the people.

The prime minister said Pakatan Rakyat's (PR) shadow budget, unveiled three days before his own Budget 2012, had only focused on Malaysia's budget gap and national debt but made no mention of public welfare.

"When they debate in Parliament they sound like very fiscal, right-wing Republican conservatives. About fiscal deficit, about debt ... (but) nothing about the people," the PM had said.

Responding today, Pakatan Rakyat (PR) lawmakers involved in drafting the shadow budget told The Malaysian Insider that the prime minister was following in the footsteps of Bush by announcing mega projects and maintaining monopolies but spending little in comparison to help the poor.

DAP strategist Liew Chin Tong (picture) said that while all parties recognised the need to boost domestic consumption as global demand will shrink next year, "we have focused on the bottom 60 per cent and believe in a 'rising tide' to spur the economy."

"The RM50 billion Mass Rapid Transit, approved permit system and rice monopoly for Bernas are Bush policies in disguise.

"He is using 'trickle-down economics', hoping the rich will spend and benefit the poor," the Bukit Bendera MP said, referring to the US president who left office in 2008.

The Bush administration was criticised for shifting the burden of taxation from the rich to middle and lower-income earners in hopes of spurring the US economy.

"We have announced a RM1,100 minimum wage to help the poor. So who is more Republican?" the Bukit Bendera MP said in response to Najib's statement yesterday that PR's budget focused purely on the fiscal deficit but not public welfare.

PAS research chief Dzulkefly Ahmad said that while the government announced RM2 billion in direct aid and RM2.5 billion in civil service pay hikes, PR had proposed RM4.9 billion and RM5.9 billion respectively for the same initiatives.

"Firstly, I don't think he understands the ideological difference between Republicans and Democrats. Secondly, he is drawing the line far away from the reality outlined by all investment analysts," the Kuala Selangor MP said.

While Najib said that the deficit will fall to 4.7 per cent from an estimated 5.4 per cent this year, PR has said that the deficit can be reined in to 4.4 per cent.

But both local and foreign analyses have doubted the Putrajaya's 2012 growth forecast of between 5 and 6 per cent.

They include CIMB and global investment giant Goldman Sachs, who have predicted growth of 3.8 and 4.2 per cent respectively.

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