

Soi Lek now blames Dr M for overbearing Umno
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 3 — The Umno-centric approach that drove the non-Malay community away from Barisan Nasional's (BN) fold began under Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's administration, Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek has said.

Disputing a recent blog entry by Dr Mahathir that faulted the embrace of liberalisation under successor Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's administration for the country's current woes, the former MCA president instead said the problems traced back to the former's tenure as prime minister.

"However, in the 21 years of Tun Mahathir's leadership, we see that the growth of Umno's political strength has made its coalition partners to become powerless in BN.

"Decisions made in the Umno Supreme Council were often become the Cabinet's decisions and I had mentioned it before in the BN Convention that, to the people, Umno is the 'taiko' and if it becomes arrogant and dictatorial, it will have adverse impact on its component parties," Dr Chua wrote in a recent Facebook post.

Saying that this approach had undermined the previously effective power-sharing model in BN, Dr Chua added that it also allowed the abuse of pro-Bumiputera affirmative action such as the New Economic Policy (NEP) that further alienated non-Malay communities.

This and a fear of the growing concentration of power in Umno's hands as demonstrated by the steadily increasing seats won by the Malay party in successive general elections since 2004 had driven the Chinese, in particular, towards DAP and away from MCA.

In Election 2013, Umno won 88 federal seats from the 133 that BN managed to retain to become by far the most dominant party in both the coalition and Parliament.

Speaking up again for market liberalisation, Dr Chua assured the Malay community that making the economy more competitive was for the benefit of all the country rather than a concession to Chinese businesses.

He also added that the inequality that policies such as the NEP sought to address were not only inter-racial, as often depicted, but was also prevalent even within the Malay community itself.

"Hence, affirmative policy must be based on need, we should help those in need regardless of race; otherwise such policy will be interpreted as an unfair policy because poverty does not exist in just one community," Dr Chua said.

Earlier last week, Dr Mahathir had targeted the embrace of openness that began under the Abdullah administration for encouraging the increased demand to abandon the

political and economic power sharing established in the aftermath of the May 13, 1969 race riots.

“Taking advantage of liberalisation and the weakened BN government, the conflict between the races heated up. The situation in Malaysia is tense as never before.

“Malaysians by and large are not violent people. But for how long can Malaysia remain stable in the face of persistent violation of the good understanding and the sharing of power between the races,” Dr Mahathir wrote on his blog today.

The country’s longest-serving prime minister also said that BN has exacerbated the issue by persisting to move away from the power-sharing ideals from previous administrations to no avail, resulting in its worst electoral performances ever in Election 2008 and again five years later in Election 2013.

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