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Patten should not meddle in our country's affairs

Hisham Abdullah

I HAVE read the published version of Chris Patten's article headlined "We must defend the Finance Minister with the black eye" (NST, Oct 28).

I must say that it smacks of a vile attempt by Patten to discredit the Malaysian Government for removing Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, because, as put by the writer, Anwar was "the deserved darling of the international financial community" and who "represented everything that the international community has asked of Asia in the last decade".

Patten also commented that Anwar had called for "free trade and open markets" and said that "to abandon him now would be to throw away our moral authority in arguing pluralism and open markets around the world", which, in my opinion, is poppycock because the Malaysian Government has always advocated such a policy and Anwar was merely carrying out his duties in furtherance of this policy.

I do not foresee any change in this policy now that Anwar has been "abandoned".

Personally, I think the praise heaped on Anwar, in flowery language, is a concoction of the writer's imagination and does not represent the view of the entire international financial community.

Frankly, I do not know why Patten would want to get himself involved in this matter.

According to Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid, Patten wanted to shore up his popularity by exploiting the matter, which is now of wide public interest.

I feel there could be some truth in this assumption because I do not think Patten knew Anwar that well to give the latter such strong support.

Then again, it could be because he seems to have a personal dislike of our Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who has always blamed the West for Malaysia's financial woes and more recently for biased reporting of the disturbances here.

I also feel that Patten was rather mischievous by stating that Anwar was "beaten to a pulp", when all Anwar had to show to the court was a black eye, which could easily have been self-inflicted.

Anyway, the case is still under investigation and it was quite unethical of Patten to have blown up the incident out of proportion.

Suffice to say, Anwar was dismissed because he is alleged to have committed certain acts of gross indecency and corruption and has been brought to court.

The people who are now causing trouble in this country are those who have been misguided into thinking that it is a "political plot", as claimed by Anwar, without giving the court a chance to decide whether he is innocent or guilty of the charges.

A smart man like Patten should, therefore, not fall into the trap of such people and meddle in another country's internal affairs and, in the process, also try to get the international financial community to do the same.

As a parting shot, I am inclined to believe that Anwar is more Patten's darling than that of the international financial community.