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Such petty mindedness

THE US Senate's decision to restrict US military training aid to Malaysia over Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's remarks regarding Jewish control of the world by proxy has, once again, proved his point. That the rebuke is couched in an insignificant term that is easily substituted merely demonstrates the ludicrousness of the issue. And, that the restriction is conditional upon religious freedom in Malaysia only demonstrates the very limited knowledge the American senators have about this country. Are they not aware that freedom of religion is enshrined in our Constitution? That more than 40 per cent Malaysians are non-Muslims, comprising Christians, Buddhists, Hindus and people of other faiths?

They have made it a point to highlight the freedom to practise the Jewish faith as part of that condition, which goes to show how petty they can be. Would we find ourselves guilty of not supporting and promoting Judaism should they discover that there is not a single Jew here? Would we find ourselves put on the defensive the way Baghdad was and Iran is at the moment to produce evidence of what does not exist in the first place? Or, must we create the evidence now and nurture a community of Jews so that we do not have to explain why there are no Malaysian Jews?

This action by the US Senate is another example of a superpower not content to allow smaller nations the pleasure of unchallenged national sovereignty. No matter how inconsequential the perceived transgression is, there will exist a US centre of power or another, which must voice its displeasure. There is always a need by some body or somebody in the US to flex its or his/her muscle even in the smallest way. The aim is to intimidate lesser nations into forced deference, always.

Such small-mindedness on the part of the senators is indeed irksome. However, it reflects a much larger and more troublesome issue: the US Senate's apparent intention at global dictatorship. If this is not so then, it stands to reason that Dr Mahathir's remarks should have been allowed to pass not least because he has been grossly misrepresented. Yet, despite our administration's attempt to clarify the situation, the desire to be fair and just remains conspicuously absent among the senators. One would have thought that America, being the self-proclaimed crusader of democracy and freedom of speech, should have its senators practise what the nation's ideology preaches. A shame really!