

Muhyiddin denies NEM 'watered down'
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Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin today denied that the New Economic Model (NEM) had been watered down under pressure from Perkasa.

He said what had been planned by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, including all the steps taken to achieve a developed and high income country by 2020, is still very much intact.

"The issue (of being watered down) does not arise. We took (into consideration) all components of society, be it bumiputera or non-bumiputera," Muhyiddin (left) told a press conference after delivering the 2011 Education Minister's Special Message at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre.

Muhyiddin's remarks come on the heels of lamentations by National Economic Advisory Council member Zainal Aznam Mohd Yusof (right) who had revealed that Perkasa and other right-wing groups were up in arms over aspects of the NEM.

They are angered, in particular, with the NEM's rejection of maintaining the 30 percent bumiputera stipulation on companies and the proposal of an equal opportunities commission.

Ex-envoy lied

On accusations by a former US envoy to Malaysia that Najib was a hypocrite for contradicting his 1Malaysia slogan, Muhyiddin claimed that this was the envoy's personal opinion, to which he is entitled.

There is no need to further the matter as the former ambassador, John Malott (left), was no longer an envoy.

"He has no status. He is not even some president and prime minister."

Muhyiddin proceeded, however, to describe Malott's claims as "a lie", and the former ambassador as probably a good friend of Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim. There is no need for media to entertain him, later you will get a headache (over the matter)," Muhyiddin added.

Dismissing Malott's remarks as merely "his opinion" Muhyiddin suggested Malott was speaking negatively about a government that had accepted him as envoy for the US.

"He stayed here before, but (now) tells lies and spins (up the issue)," he said. John Malott had lambasted Najib in a scathing article published on Tuesday in the Asian Wall Street Journal., accusing the premier of being hypocritical with regards to treatment of minorities.