

Dr M: TPPA will bind our hands and feet
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Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad has warned that the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) was lopsided in which Malaysia would be taken advantage of.

In a post on his blog yesterday, Mahathir described the TPPA as a "partnership of unequals" and warned that Malaysia has a reputation of getting into bad deals.

"When the currency rogues attacked us the purpose was to gain control over our economy. We resisted that because we were still free then.

"But after we sign the TPPA we will be bound hand and foot. No more capital controls. We will be colonised again. President Sukarno was right about neo-colonialism," wrote Mahathir.

He described the TPPA as "another attempt" by the United States to allow their huge corporations to penetrate the domestic markets of small countries, particular in government procurement.

Previous attempts, according to Mahathir, were through the General Agreement on Trade and Tariff (GATT), World Trade Organisation (WTO) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec).

"They introduced bilateral free trade agreements. Then they promoted a globalised world, a world without borders in which their money can go anywhere, destroy economies and then pull out.

"In case we have forgotten, they did this in 1997/1998," he wrote.

Transparency

In view of this, Mahathir urged the federal government to show transparency regarding the TPPA negotiation and ignore the October ultimatum to conclude talks.

"I know MITI is already set to agree to the TPP. It will not entertain any counter arguments. It wants to do this secretly. We don't punish people who make agreements detrimental to the interest of this country. So what is there to lose?"

Among the lopsided past-deals cited by Mahathir were Malaysia's sale of cheap

water to Singapore for 6 sen per 1,000 gallons until 2060, the procurement of limited functionality F/A-18 aircraft which he described "very expensive toys" and how the Asean Free Trade Agreement (Afta) was unfavourable to Proton.

The TPPA involves nine countries - United States, Australia, Brunei, Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam - that negotiate terms of the deal in secret.

Based on what is known through leaked documents, critics have warned that the deal will result in Malaysians paying for more expensive medication, affect copyright legislations and subject the federal government to off-shore lawsuits by big companies.

Sabah is playing host to the 18th round of TPPA talks. It will be held at the Sutera Harbour from July 15 to 25.

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