

**Your take on TPPA is naive, PSM tells Rafizi**  
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Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) today chided PKR's Rafizi Ramli for thinking that only "right wing elements" oppose the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA).

The MP for Pandan does not realise that the TPPA will be bad for all Malaysians, PSM national treasurer A Sivarajan said.

The opposition to the trade agreement comes not only from former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad but also from workers unions, farmers, petty traders, students and others, and not just from those seeking to protect local bumiputera interests.

"Instead of making off-the-cuff remarks on the TPPA, Rafizi should sincerely study these materials. He too would be convinced about the negative impacts of the trade agreement," Sivarajan (left) said in a press statement.

He said Rafizi had complained that the problem with TPPA was that its negotiations, now going on among 14 countries, lacked transparency. This completely missed the point, PSM said.

"Does that mean that if he is shown the negotiating text, Rafizi will give his thumbs up to approve it? To claim that transparency issue is the key stumbling block to approving the agreement is very naive," Sivarajan said.

PSM, which has worked with PKR in the past on common causes, said PKR's lukewarm response to the TPPA showed the lack of an "alternative economic model" should it ever takeover Putrajaya.

Courage, farsightedness is needed

"To take on a superpower like the United States of America and steer our nation into a truly alternative pro-rakyat economic model requires courage and farsightedness.

"Unfortunately both BN and Pakatan Rakyat seem to be more like the two sides of the same coin 'kow tow-ing' to US economic hegemony," Sivarajan said.

He urged Rafizi to study the experience of Latin American countries that were moving away from being victims of the US-led free trade agreements.

Led by Venezuela, these countries were starting a new trade block, known as the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas in opposition to US free trade agreements (FTAAS).

"Latin America has found that it would not be possible to sign the FTAAS without violating their respective national constitutions and trampling on their people's rights," Sivarajan said.

In Malaysia's case, he said, from the 29 chapters being negotiated under the TPPA, only five to six chapters were on traditional trade matters, while the rest sought to control and dictate Malaysia's local economy and policy space.

Malaysia now has a surplus trade balance with the US, with exports worth nearly US\$26 billion (RM82.88 billion), compared with imports worth US\$13 billion (RM41.44 billion), without the TPPA, he noted.

This trade balance would flip as the lopsided TPPA would make sure that Malaysia buys more than it sells to the US.

Rafizi, who is PKR's director of strategy, yesterday urged Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to use the TPPA to gain leverage over US and urge President Barack Obama to stop siding with Israel.

This, Rafizi argued, is to punish Israel for its recent heavy shelling of Palestinian Gaza, in retaliation for the killing of three Jewish students last month.