

Dr M: I would have axed dissenting ministers

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By Koh Jun Lin

Dr Mahathir Mohamad has always been accused of ruling the nation for more than two decades with an iron fist and clamping down on dissent albeit internal or external.

And now the former premier has admitted that he preferred to give ministers who disagreed with him the marching orders instead of ultimatums.

Mahathir said this when commenting on Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's call on cabinet ministers who disagreed with him on the 1MDB issue to resign.

Quizzed if this amounted to preventing check and balance, he replied: "I don't know, but during my time, ministers who cannot agree with my policy, I drop them and replace them."

"But when they agree again with my policy, I take them back," he added, once again suggesting that there were no permanent friends or foes in politics.

However, Mahathir conceded that it is within Najib's right as prime minister to issue ultimatums.

On a related matter, Mahathir was asked if he would attend a dialogue session organised by the NGO SukaGuam, where Najib has been invited to answer questions from NGOs and civil society groups.

"I don't know, I'm not invited," he replied.

Earlier, Mahathir took a swipe at the entire cabinet for being incapable in dealing with the 1MDB issue.

The former premier has cited the problems and questionable transactions involving the firm as among the reasons for Najib to resign.

Mahathir believes that if the prime minister continues to helm Umno and BN, the ruling coalition would be toppled in the next general election.

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