

Zahid: NSC bill doesn't give absolute power to PM
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Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the National Security Council (NSC) bill which was approved by Parliament, had no political motive or gave absolute power to the prime minister.

He said the bill, which was passed by the Dewan Rakyat on Thursday, was to strengthen enforcement in comprehensively looking after the security of the people in the country.

"The unhappiness of some individuals and non-governmental organisations (over the matter) should be looked at but the parties concerned too should read what is implicit in the act, whereby power is not given absolutely to the prime minister, deputy prime minister, defence minister, home minister, communications and multimedia minister or other ministers connected with the issue of security.

"Instead, the power is given to the council, namely, a body which does not abuse power. Meaning, the full executive power is not with the PM but with this body as had been done before with Poca and Pota, namely, the crime prevention law and terrorism prevention law. This must be understood."

Ahmad Zahid said this at a press conference after closing the One Community, One RTD programme of the Bagan Datoh parliamentary constituency and launching the 'Jom JPJ Bersama M' drive in the grounds of Wisma Umno, in Hutan Melintang, today.

He hoped those who always gave negative comments would see that the act was drawn up based on what happened to the Eastern Sabah Security Command (Esscom), whereby the power to arrest vested in the police, was not possessed by the Malaysian Armed Forces.

"So, with the NSC law, it will give power in the interest of the people at large in ensuring security and they (detractors) should not just view the matter from the human rights aspect, but to also be aware of the human rights of the victims if there's infiltration, killing, kidnapping... ultimately, they will put the blame on the government.

"Enough, just give your cooperation so as not to confuse the matter, so that the bill that was tabled and passed in the Dewan Rakyat can be accepted as truly not politically motivated but to boost enforcement in looking after public security," he said.

Real objective

Ahmad Zahid was also asked on the suggestion by a constitutional expert that the power be given to the agong.

"As for emergency, the power to announce, declare and gazette it is vested in the agong and as for a curfew order, the power is vested in the home minister and taking over the power

of the agong does not arise," he said.

"I hope they had read the real objective of the bill when it was tabled in the Dewan Rakyat."

He said when Esscom was established, it was mainly administrative, making it difficult for enforcement to be carried out by the agency.

"But the NSC Act is to give enforcement power to any body, not just Esscom which was set up to look after a certain area (ESSZone), as well as the police and other enforcement agencies to conduct joint enforcement operations.

"Such power is given so that when the cases go to court, they will not be challenged by the lawyers, purportedly because of human rights violations and in the end due to technical reasons, the cases can be thrown out by the courts.

"I wish to repeat that overall, the NSC Act is aimed at safeguarding public and national security," he said.

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