

## **Kit Siang: Najib another flip-flop PM?**

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's non-committal stance in the face of "ferocious and incendiary rejection" from yesterday's Bumiputera Economic Congress has veteran opposition lawmaker Lim Kit Siang wondering if his New Economic Plan (NEM) will fall flat even before getting off the ground.

NONELim (right) was commenting on Najib's speech yesterday at the closing of the Malay Consultative Council congress, where the premier retreated from the challenge by saying NEM was not the government's "final stand" but a "trial balloon" by a panel of experts.

Lim criticised the response as "meek and timid".

"It raises the question of whether Najib is backing off from the NEM to become an even bigger 'flip-flop PM' than his predecessor," Lim said in a statement today.

Congress chairperson Ibrahim Ali last night stated in front of Najib that the council, and by self-proclaimed implication the Malay community, rejected the NEM because its neo-liberal ideals were allegedly detrimental to the Malays.

Ibrahim also warned Najib not to "betray" the New Economic Policy - which outlined affirmative action policies for the Malays and Bumiputeras - installed by the prime minister's father and second Prime Minister Abdul Razak in 1971.

Lim expressed dismay that despite the NEM's ambitious aims of steering the nation towards a high-income economy away from its two-decade middle-income trap, the premier may not have the political will to see it through.

'Defining moment in failure'

"It appears that it may end up more as a defining moment in the grave failings of the year-old Najib administration," said Lim.

NONELim reminded Najib (in pink in photo) that the NEM's goals were critical for the nation's survival and warned of dire consequences for Malaysia should the government fail to reform the economy.

He pointed in particular to the NEM identifying the NEP's failings, which included "rent-seeking behaviour, patronage and opaque government procurements and pervasive corruption".

The opposition veteran questioned if Najib's NEM would be a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure if the premier cannot muster the "political will and leadership to break the log-jam of resistance by vested interest groups and preparing the rakyat to support deep-seated changes in policy directions".

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