

Najib coy on 'extremist' definition
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has dropped more hints on the identity of the "extremist" which he said must be shunned in his Malaysia Day message on Wednesday.

During a speech at a seminar this afternoon, the premier said that the government keeps its distances from "certain groups" in society.

"Like with our affirmative action. We accept the goal of it, but why don't we redefine affirmative action?"

"We have to be seen to be more fair and market-friendly in our objective in the current economic environment

"They have made the decision to accept a myopic view and to be selfish in their rights," he said, without dropping any names, just like in his Malaysia Day message.

"When someone is insensitive to the needs and aspiration of 'others', the disparity between the communities will become wider.

"Although there have been efforts to unite the races by the government, the various ethnicities are still facing problems interacting and this is an issue we have to resolve together," he said during a seminar entitled 'Living in a Multi-Ethnic Society' organised by the 1Malaysia Foundation.

najib yayaan 1malaysia seminar 120910But in the context of affirmative action policies, Najib (right in pic, with 1Malaysia Foundation chairman Chandra Muzaffar) was likely referring to Malay rights pressure group Perkasa, which have been criticising his New Economic Model (NEM) stresses on the needs to gradually wean the bumiputra community of preferential treatment.

Perkasa is arguing that the NEM would erode Malay rights enshrined in Article 153 of the Federal Constitution, a charge which has been repeatedly denied by Najib.

However, when asked at a press conference later if he was referring to Perkasa, Najib said he wasn't referring to anyone in particular.

"No, no, I'm not talking about anyone. Why are you talking about Perkasa? I'm talking about how times have changed. We've not forgotten the objectives of affirmative action because we want a fair and balanced society.

"And we are refining the mechanics of getting there," he said.

Perkasa like any other NGO

When pressed on the issue, Najib remained non-committal about the very vocal organisation, but left some telling statements.

"We don't want to be in conflict with any NGO. As far as Umno is concerned, Perkasa is like any other NGO. At times we can agree, at times we can't.

"But what's important is that Umno is part of the government, and what Umno says is what matters," said Najib, who is the party president.

Previously, several Umno leaders including secretary-general Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, supreme council member Mohamed Nazri Aziz as well as its Youth chief have been very vocal against the NGO.

At the same time, Malaysiakini understands that Najib has instructed his party leaders as well as cabinet ministers to distance themselves from Perkasa.

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