

BN MPs: Defence minister shot himself in foot
Malaysiakini.com
November 10, 2010

The defence minister's suggestion that non-Malays lack patriotism for not joining the military has gone down badly with other MPs in the ruling coalition.

mca youth agm 091010 wee ka siong Deputy Education Minister Wee Ka Siong (right) said that Defence Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamid's stinging remark yesterday that the Chinese and Indians lacked patriotism as they did not seem to want to join the Armed Forces is akin to shooting himself in the foot.

"That remark was uncalled for. It has nothing to do with patriotism. We have many ways of expressing our love for the country and it's not only by joining the army," said Wee, who is also the MCA Youth chief.

Ahmad Zahid had also reasoned that families and their ethnic communities often do not encourage the involvement of their youths in the army.

"Every community has its preference. The Chinese want to go into business but that doesn't mean they are not patriotic," said Wee.

"Many Indians are lawyers and doctors. Even if we ask them to join other fields they may not want to. It's their choice," he said.

Wee (BN-Ayer Hitam) concurred that, as citizens, everyone is "duty-bound to serve the country".

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department SK Devamany also reiterated that there are many reasons why non-Malays are not in the military.

ahmad zahid hamidi "Many are eliminated in the interview stage itself and many go on to join the Singapore Armed Forces. We should look at why such things are happening, instead of using (lack of) patriotism as the cause," said Devamany (BN-Cameron Highland).

He also urged Ahmad Zahid (left) to give the Indians who are interested in joining the military a chance.

"Let's advertise for one month for people who want to join the army and maybe prove Mindef wrong that their patriotism is still there," he said.

Recruitment drive

Devamany stressed that the ministry should give MIC a chance to bring in 1,000 Indians in the recruitment drive.

Human Resources Minister S Subramaniam (BN-Segamat) added that another concern was the perceived lack of promotion opportunities for non-Malays.

"This has resulted in the lack of interest in them to join the army," he said.

Subramaniam added that he too was disappointed by the statement, more so when it comes

from a leader.

"Secondly maybe the interview process was not conducive to them...we don't know, but to say that they are not interested is wrong because I know there are many who want to join," said Devamany who is also MIC vice-president.

Similarly, Deputy Minister for Natural Resources and Environment Joseph Kurup noted that many youths are unaware of the army's recruitment process.

Kurup (BN-Pensiangan) said he often advises his constituents "to not waste time loitering" and instead join the police or army.

"Sometimes there are complaints that even though they apply they don't get it. The recruitment process should be purely on merit instead of looking at racial divisions," he added.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/147838>