

**Gerakan and MCA blast Zahid over statement  
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Defence Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has received another hit from a Barisan Nasional component party for his recent infamous statement in Parliament, that lack of patriotism is the reason for the poor non-Malay participation in the armed forces.

Penang Gerakan secretary Goh Kheng Sneah said Ahmad Zaid's Tuesday comment was "racially biased, shallow and chauvinistic in nature".

He said the state party was "stunned and disappointed" that a senior cabinet minister could issue such a "provocative" statement as Prime Minister Najib Razak was promoting moderation through his 1Malaysia concept.

NONE"Instead of finding solutions by identifying the root cause of the issue, the Defence Minister is finding an easy way out for himself in this complex problem," Goh (right) said at a press conference held at the party's Jalan Macalister state headquarters.

"We should be aware that this setback involves all Malaysians, not only the Chinese and Indians," he added.

Ahmad Zahidi was attacked by several parties for his statement, the most recent coming from Deputy Education Minister Wee Ka Siong who likened the former's blunder to "shooting himself in the foot".

MCA publicity deputy chairperson Loh Seng Kok said that he hoped Ahmad Zahid would not jump to the conclusion that lack of patriotism was the cause for the low number of non-Malay recruits today.

Responding to the criticisms, Ahmad Zahid had clarified that he had not questioned the loyalty and integrity of non-Malays in reply to a question raised in Parliament.

He explained that what he had said was that it was possible that the lack of non-Malays in military could be due to several factors, including the sense of patriotism that is not strong enough.

Goh said Ahmad Zahidi must explain what he really meant when he mentioned that "lack of patriotism leads to the low number of Chinese and Indian military recruits".

He said the party wanted to reiterate that despite the differences, all Malaysians are equally committed and no one should ever doubt or question the patriotism of others to the country.

"The lack of participation (in the military) by Chinese and Indians does not mean they love the country any less," he added.

