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# Slanging over Dollah's book

By Rusdi Mustapha

A CONTROVERSY has erupted over Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie's role in shaping Malaysia's foreign policy in the first years after Independence.

It has now become a slanging match between the former Foreign Minister and Datuk Abdullah Ahmad, who wrote the book *Tunku Abdul Rahman and Malaysia's Foreign Policy 1963 to 1970*. (The book was reviewed by *The Sunday Star* on May 11).

Datuk Abdullah contends in his book that Tan Sri Ghazali, who was then the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had nothing to do with the creation of policy although he has claimed credit for many policies.

The debate, which has appeared in the news columns of *Utusan Malaysia*, has now moved from Tan Sri Ghazali's role to his person.

It started out with a *Utusan Malaysia* review by Awang Selamat which states that Tan Sri Ghazali had nothing to do with the formulation of Malaysian foreign policy.

Another writer, Chamil Wariya, accused Datuk Abdullah of purposely leaving out Tan Sri Ghazali as a source for his book since Tan Sri Ghazali (when he was Home Minister) was responsible for detaining Datuk Abdullah in 1976.

He added that Tan Sri Ghazali should have been interviewed since he was with the Foreign Ministry for as long as 13 years.

Datuk Abdullah replied: "Must I?" "Any scholar would know that in the presence of a superior primary source, it was not necessary to interview a sub-standard one," he wrote in reply.

A few days later another writer, using *nom de plume* ZAF, wrote a rejoinder saying Tan Sri Ghazali was considered the great architect of Malaysia's foreign policy.

Tan Sri Ghazali, he said, was a man with an intellectual capacity in the same league as both the late Jose Rizal of the Philippines and Adam Malik of Indonesia.

By not interviewing Tan Sri Ghazali, the writer said, Datuk Abdullah was leaving a gap in the history of the period.

ZAF contended that as a Minister Tan Sri Ghazali was never boastful and pretentious over his contributions towards the country's foreign policy.

Datuk Abdullah swung back to his defence by asking: "Who is ZAF and why is he saying all these nasty things about Tunku and Dr Mahathir?"

He said: "God forbid, who is this ZAF to put Ghazali into the same category as Jose Rizal and Adam Malik."

He went on to reveal that when he was a Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Tun Abdul Razak had asked him to find out who ZAF was.

When Datuk Abdullah found out, he reported the fact back. Tun Razak was supposed to have replied: "Just

as I thought."

But Datuk Abdullah did not reveal who ZAF was either. The inference he seems to want the reader to draw is that ZAF is none other than Tan Sri Ghazali himself.

"Why can't this writer reveal his real name?" he questioned.

Datuk Abdullah again held that Tan Sri Ghazali was merely a gopher for Tunku who remained the real father and architect of Malaysia's foreign policy.

Datuk Abdullah then launched into an attack on Tan Sri Ghazali's personality. He said that Tan Sri Ghazali's nationalism was marred by his ego.

He also said that the Malays, especially Umno leaders and members, were quite well-versed with Tan Sri Ghazali's character.

"To them Ghazali was shifty — a weathervane, who turned where the wind blew," he said.

He said that was why Tan Sri Ghazali never made it to more than the sixth place within the Umno supreme council "despite all the political tricks he used when he was Home Affairs Minister."

Datuk Abdullah called on all who questioned the validity of his book by saying that scholars who wished to "correct history" should first study Tan Sri Ghazali's background.

Tan Sri Ghazali should be evaluated as a kampung boy, citizen, Umno member, a Minister, a friend, a husband, a father, an investor, a diplomat, an adventurer and finally the pilot of the plane which he crashed, kill-



Tan Sri Ghazali ... Foreign Minister for 13 years



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ing two of his aides near Janda Baik in Pahang, he said.

"But for this, researchers need not interview me for as far as I am concerned the finding about him should all be the same as God is my witness," he wrote.

The editor of *Utusan Malaysia* then stepped in, saying that no further letters on the subject would be entertained.

Many people are betting that the final word has not been said about the subject.