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'Dr M has stooped so low'

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UNPRINCIPLED:

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad turning to foreign media to bash PM, Umno, says Shahrir

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IT is very unbecoming of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to turn to foreign media to bash the country's leadership, says Tan Sri Shahrir Abdul Samad.

The BN Backbenchers chairman said the Dr Mahathir had gone against his own principle when he criticised Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Umno during a recent interview in the *New York Times*.

In the article titled *Power struggle*

in Malaysia pits former premier against a protégé, Dr Mahathir was quoted as saying that Umno lacked vision and talented people, and that it had become a source of power-crazy politicians.

Shahrir said he was disappointed that Dr Mahathir decided to turn to an international media agency just to attack the prime minister and the party he used to preside over.

"During his premiership, he kept telling others not to talk to or trust foreign media because they had their own agenda and that they are controlled by a group with certain interests, but now he has stooped so low that he abandoned his own principles just to get at Najib.

"He certainly must be so upset and bent on bringing Najib down that he had to resort to this."

Shahrir said had Dr Mahathir received encouraging response from Umno leaders and Barisan Nasional parties as well as gained success in his attacks against Najib, he would not have had talked to the NYT.

"He found no traction to his al-

legations among Umno leaders and members of the parliament, so he decided to do what he has been against," he added.

The NYT article, which also came out in the *International Herald Tribune* and *The Australian*, quoted Dr Mahathir as saying, "The little Napoleons in Umno try to keep out people who are more intelligent than themselves".

Shahrir denied the statement, saying that Dr Mahathir had created the scenario deliberately and that the real test of a party's policy was the candidates it put up in elections.

Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin echoed Shahrir's sentiment and said the party had no problem in opening its doors to young professionals.

"Umno Youth has opened an online portal for recruitment where anybody can join. Just last month

almost 300 people joined online."

On Dr Mahathir's claim that what Najib did was verging on crime as quoted in NYT, Khairy said it was highly irresponsible and uncalled for.

"Saying somebody is a criminal is

a very serious allegation. If you cannot show proof that the person had done a criminal act, these allegations should be dismissed."

Sabah Assembly Speaker Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak also moved to debunk Dr Mahathir's accusations against Najib.

"Najib has not been convicted of any crime. I wonder what the foreign media must be thinking of Dr Mahathir's inconsistent and contradictory statements.

"He is beginning to sound extremely incoherent that it has become an embarrassment to Malaysia."

"Saying somebody is a criminal is a very serious allegation."
Khairy Jamaluddin
Umno Youth chief