

Newspaper	New Straits Times
Date	8 June 2015

NOTHING2HIDE DIALOGUE

Allow the prime minister to do his job

NST
- 8/6/2015

THE decision by Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar to call off the Nothing2Hide dialogue by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak was the right thing to do, given the tense atmosphere with invitees waiting to pounce on Najib on any issue that did not satisfy their appetite.

The situation was made worse with the unexpected attendance of former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, an ardent critic of Najib's policies. Not that Dr Mahathir is a threat but his supporters could have turned the well-intentioned dialogue into a mudslinging and name-calling match, which is alien to our culture.

Whatever agenda they may have, respect must be given to the prime minister of the day. He should be well received and questions asked should not be confrontational with

the intention of undermining the prime minister.

In the heated situation that was expected, anything untoward could have happened. Despite the prime minister giving the best that he could, there would have been someone in the hall who may not be happy. He or she would certainly have taken the opportunity to hit out at the prime minister.

It is fine if the audience asks sensible questions while, at the same time, being mindful of etiquette.

I recently attended Dr Mahathir's book launch for *Letters To World Leaders* at the Perdana Leadership Foundation and took the opportunity to ask a question about re-introducing English-medium schools.

I asked very politely, ever mindful that Dr Mahathir is the former prime minister and a great statesman.



Dr Mahathir's reply was not to my satisfaction, but I did not engage him in a debate. I could have done that as he was no more in power and I could even have raised

my voice as I see that the present generation is suffering in silence for being handicapped in English. I did not go overboard out of respect for Dr Mahathir, who has done so



Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad leaving the hall after the cancellation of the Nothing2Hide dialogue. The inspector-general of police was wise in discontinuing the event.

much good for the nation as prime minister for 22 years.

Likewise, we should learn to respect Najib, who is the current prime minister.

He may have his shortcomings, as pointed out by Dr Mahathir, but the fact that he was prepared to attend the dialogue means that he is sincere.

He should be given the chance to meet the non-governmental organisations without interruption or attempts to undermine and discredit him.

Every leader in the world is not without fault. Decisions made by them are based on expert advice by a team of advisers.

Some leaders have the knack for making the right decision on his own, while others have to depend on trusted key members to give advice.

Indeed, "heavy is the head that wears the crown" holds true for every leader.

It could not have been easy for the IGP to make the decision to

advise Najib to not continue with the dialogue. Certainly, it will be the talk of the town. He expected that.

More important to him is the safety of the prime minister and security of the nation.

Of course, many would want Najib to appear, despite the alleged security threat against him. Najib, being a gentleman, would also feel uncomfortable cancelling the much-anticipated dialogue. Just like the US president, Najib cannot take risks and act on his own.

He has to get the clearance of security forces to attend any function.

Security is not a case of personality; it is the institution of the prime minister that matters.

Meanwhile, let us take note of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong's message that there should be less politicking and allow Najib to continue with his job without hindrance.

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