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Making a point: Mahathir delivering his keynote address at the second annual Malaysia's War On Corruption Symposium.



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Dr M: Tawfik never liked me

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KUALALUMPUR: Tun Dr Mahatir Mohamad said he was not surprised that G25 member Tawfik Ismail had spoken out against his suggestion to replace the Prime Minister, as the former politician has never liked him.

However, he said Tawfik was "entitled to say what he liked", and that his views did not represent the stand of G25, a group of prominent Malays espousing moderate values.

"Why he should come to see me with the others in the group is beyond me. Obviously he's come with bad intentions.

"In front of me, he even appeared to be supportive but behind me is another matter," the former prime minister told reporters after delivering a keynote address at the second annual Malaysia's War on Corruption Symposium yesterday.

Dr Mahathir also admitted to mooting the idea of a "council of elders" to advise the Prime Minister after Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak as it would allow him to listen to different opinions.

He said this was because under the current

system the prime minister chose his own Cabinet and would pick those who supported his decisions all the time.

"Whatever the prime minister does will be okayed by the Cabinet.

"If there is an outside council appointed by other people, they may not agree with him all the time.

"They can give their opinions, which the PM may not necessarily accept, but at least it will allow him to hear other opinions," the former premier said without elaborating how the council would function.

Tawfik, who is the son of the second deputy prime minister Tun Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman, said in a recent interview that the G25 had met with Dr Mahathir on two separate occasions this year.

He had said during the first meeting the topic of replacing Najib was raised and that he had responded by saying that the group did not wish to get involved and felt that whoever was to take over would not fare any better.

This prompted Dr Mahathir to suggest that a council of elders would "guide" whoever was appointed next.