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# Najib and Ku Li: We have no ill-will towards each other

The Star - 2/12/2016

PM explains his then decision to back Dr M  
was based on loyalty to the party president

DATUK Seri Najib Tun Razak and Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah both declared that they have no hard feelings towards each other following the acrimonious 1987 Umno election.

Najib in his speech at the opening of the Umno general assembly pointed out that he and many other party members remained firm behind the then president Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad when he was challenged by Tengku Razaleigh.

Tengku Razaleigh and his "Team B" group of supporters had challenged Dr Mahathir, who led "Team A" for the Umno presidency.

Tengku Razaleigh lost with a narrow majority, triggering events that eventually led to the birth of the splinter Semangat 46 party.

"At the time, Tengku Razaleigh was disheartened (*berkecil hati*) with the decision my team and I made to side with Dr Mahathir," said Najib, who was the Umno Youth chief then.

Najib explained that he had made the decision to back Dr Mahathir based on the principle of loyalty to the party president.

"Personally, I am very close to Tengku Razaleigh and until now I respect him and will continue to do so," added Najib.

Najib, who is now the Umno president, related the 1987 episode to illustrate how Dr Mahathir who is now the chairman of Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (Pribumi) had turned his back on Umno supporters who had stood by him.

When met later, Tengku Razaleigh brushed off suggestions that he harboured ill-will



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Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah

against Najib in the aftermath of the 1987 party election.

"He mentioned that I was disheartened (*berkecil hati*). But I do not feel that way. This is a democracy.

"It is just that I felt he made a wrong choice (to support Dr Mahathir in 1987)," the Gua Musang MP said with a laugh.

Tengku Razaleigh said that Najib's speech this year was a good one and it demonstrated that the Prime Minister has a big heart.

"Despite all the criticisms, he is very cool. He has accepted it.

"But of course he is also a human being and has a responsibility. I suppose a man in that position will have to expect a lot of criticisms. It is part of democracy," he said.