

**Bygones, MCA says of Hisham putdown**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
**August 31, 2011**  
**By Shannon Teoh**

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 31 — MCA leaders today refrained from criticising Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein despite a revelation that he had blamed Barisan Nasional's (BN) Chinese party in 2007 for failing to contain fallout over Umno members' racially-charged speeches from 2006.

Instead, they pointed out that the Umno man had already made a public apology over the issue in 2008.

A leaked United States diplomatic cable released today had quoted the then Umno Youth chief as blaming MCA for being too weak to contain the fallout from racial rhetoric at the 2006 Umno general assembly.

MCA leaders told The Malaysian Insider today, however, that this did not reflect Hishammuddin's current views of his BN colleagues.

"This happened four years ago. You can't say that this is his current stand," MCA vice president Datuk Donald Lim Siang Chai said today.

The deputy finance minister insisted that the situation has since changed.

Citing the leaked missive in which Hishammuddin had said that he could not campaign in Chinese areas, Lim today pointed out that the Umno leader had visited Pandan, a seat won by former MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat, ahead of Election 2008.

MCA central committee member Datuk Ti Lian Ker similarly said that "it is an issue buried" after Hishammuddin had publicly apologised in April 2008 for having stirred up racial distress by waving a keris at the 2005 Umno general assembly.

"He already apologised for things said in the past. Let's move ahead," the Kuantan MCA chief said.

According to the leaked cable published on Malaysia Today, Hishammuddin had told US envoys in 2007 that MCA was at fault for being too weak to manage the reaction of non-Malays to the racially-charged rhetoric of the 2006 Umno general assembly.

The then education minister said that Umno's race rhetoric was necessary to vent the frustrations of the Malays, but that the government would not allow it to get out of hand.

When contacted, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek also said that if he reacted, "it would result in very inflammatory comments" and that such matters should not be played up.

Despite critics calling Hishammuddin's 2008 apology half-hearted, his BN colleagues had also then called for the issue to be put to rest.

Although Hishammuddin was reported to have assured US diplomats that racial tension would not be allowed to get out of hand, several racially charged incidents have occurred

since the Umno vice president took over as home minister in April 2009.

A few months after he took over the portfolio, several Muslims had protested the relocation of a Hindu temple by dragging a severed cow's head on the streets of Shah Alam.

A video clip of the incident showed that the protestors stomped and spat on the cow's head while police took no action. Hishammuddin was also reported to have defended the protestors and blamed the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) state government for relocating the temple.

In January 2010, places of worship were firebombed after the High Court ruled that Christians could use the word Allah to refer to God in the Malay language, a decision that has been appealed but has reached no resolution up to now.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2011 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/bygoner-mca-says-of-hisham-putdown/>