

Dr Mahathir says a strong leader will turn down Pacific trade pact
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BY EILEEN NG

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad suggested today that prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak needs to prove he is a strong leader by rejecting the contentious Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA).

The former prime minister today referred to Najib's comments on the need to have strong leaders to steer the country forward, saying the TPPA is another way for foreign powers to colonise it.

He added that it would be unwise for Putrajaya to rush through the negotiations.

"The quality of a strong leader is his willingness to stand up against foreign pressure and protect the interests of the country.

"If you can't do that, then you are not considered a strong leader," Mahathir (pic) said after launching the book, "TPPA : Malaysia is not for sale by the Malay Economic Action Council".

Najib on Wednesday said poor leadership would lead Malaysia to disaster.

Using Brazil's shocking 1-7 loss to Germany in the World Cup semi-finals as an analogy, Najib said: "When I watched Brazil, their defence was all over the place. I put it down to lack of leadership. There was no proper leadership.

"If that could happen to a football team, imagine what would happen to a country that does not have effective leadership... the answer is, we will end up like Brazil."

Dr Mahathir agreed with Najib's assessment and said a country will benefit from strong, brave and steadfast leaders who could ward off attacks.

The mark of a good leader, he said, is the ability to reject what is bad for the country.

"If they bow down to foreign pressure, they can't be considered as strong leaders.

"A strong leader is brave and can ward off any threats, not bow down to any pressure and put the nation's interests first.

"If we bow down to them, it does not necessarily mean they'll support us because some quarters will try to bring down the government," he said, adding that strong leaders will also ensure Malaysia is peaceful and harmonious.

Mahathir, however, said strong leaders need the support of the people to tackle challenges such as the TPPA.

"I believe if strong leaders have the support of the Malay Economic Action Council, Insha' Allah, TPPA will be 100% rejected, " he added.

Dr Mahathir, who governed Malaysia for 22 years, has been a vocal opponent of the trade deal and warned the TPPA will not benefit the country.

"I don't think TPPA will do us good. Malaysia is already successful without TPPA and the free-trade agreements.

"We don't need the TPPA because it is tricky. Why are negotiations done in secret if it is not to cheat people?"

Dr Mahathir, who oversaw the country's transformation into an industrialised developing nation during his years in power, said Malaysia had recorded double digit growth even without TPPA.

"TPPA is an attempt to control trade. It is not a free trade. What we are enjoying today is free trade," he said.

Najib said the TPPA deal would be completed by year-end on terms acceptable to the country.

Najib, who is also finance minister, said if the date could not be met, Malaysia would continue with the negotiations as the deadline was not important but the contents of the TPP agreement were.

He said the aim of the TPP agreement was to expand trade and market access in terms of economic and investment growth; and to uphold the country's sovereignty based on current principles.

He also attributed criticisms of the TPPA to the opposition, saying that the benefits can only be seen in the long term.

"Of course, that is the work of the opposition, they will oppose everything. What is good for the people they will oppose but there are times when you can only see the benefits in the long term," Najib said.

The TPPA is a free trade agreement involving 11 countries, namely Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States and Vietnam. – July 11, 2014.

- See more at: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/dr-mahathir-says-a-strong-leader-will-turn-down-pacific-trade-pact#sthash.Tz4hBSQc.dpuf>

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