

Najib was just giving excuses to Obama, says Anwar
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BY EILEEN NG

Datuk Seri Najib Razak was just giving excuses when he told United States president Barack Obama his reforms were being hampered by forces within and outside his own party Umno, said opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

In hitting out at the prime minister for his excuses, which he said was the same in the last few years, Anwar added that it was just a pretext of Putrajaya's utter incompetency and ineptitude in terms of governance, corruption and rule of law.

He said his views on this were conveyed to US national security adviser Susan Rice during their one on one meeting yesterday.

"I told Rice that the prime minister is virtually an emperor. You control the media, judiciary, enforcement forces, party and parliament and yet you say you are still powerless?"

"Why are you the prime minister if you can't define the rights, honour and dignity of your citizens?" he said at the press conference at the PKR headquarters today.

According to Bar Council president Christopher Leong, Obama recognised Najib has the instinct for moderation and unity, but elements outside and within Umno are the stumbling blocks.

Leong – who together with nine other civil society representatives had an hour-long meeting with the president on Sunday – agreed with Obama that the prime minister's efforts were a difficult task.

Obama was in Malaysia over the weekend as part of his Asia tour.

Anwar questioned how Najib could portray himself as a reformer and at the same time, give the impression that his hands were tied.

"He's virtually an emperor with full power and authority. Are you saying you can't deal with groups like Perkasa and Isma, which you fund?" he said, referring to two pro-Umno Malay rights groups.

He also agreed with Obama that Malaysia needed to ensure equal opportunities for the non-Muslim communities, saying that even some segments of the Bumiputera were marginalised.

"I don't think anyone can deny the fact that there are concerns by ethnic minorities in this country, about marginalisation. And that also includes poor Bumiputera and rural Malays, Dayak and Kadazans," he said.

He said this fact still remains even if it was denied by Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi yesterday, who insisted the country does not impose any restrictions on non-Muslims and is fair to all races.

"What else did you expect the Home Minister to say?" Anwar said. – April 29, 2014.

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