

Najib a questionable ally, says the Post
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By FMT Reporters

Newspaper editorial warns Obama that his golfing buddy is evolving into an 'unseemly pal'.

KUALA LUMPUR: US President Barack Obama has been warned that his golfing buddy Najib Razak has been “evolving into an increasingly unseemly pal” since they played a round of golf during Obama’s Christmas holiday last year in a rare show of friendship for a foreign leader.

In an editorial today, the Washington Post questioned the US government’s support for Najib, whom it described as a “sullied prime minister” and repeated what Nurul Izzah Anwar had asked American officials this week: “For all that you are investing in Malaysia, are you getting your money’s worth?”

Nurul Izzah has been on a visit to the US to lobby officials to put pressure on the Malaysian government to free her father, jailed in February on a sodomy charge, or at least to allow him to undergo surgery for a shoulder injury.

The Post said Najib had once positioned himself as a reformer “who would lead a quasi-authoritarian state to genuine democracy. Now he is trying to consolidate his position by appealing to the worst currents in Malaysian politics: ethnic chauvinism and Islamic fundamentalism.”

Although Najib was cooperating with U.S. intelligence agencies and the trade representative, and US appeared to be counting on Najib to deliver Malaysia’s support for the Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade agreement, “but his repression and pandering to racists and Muslim extremists risks destroying the foundations of the alliance,” the Post said.

Obama should make that point clear to Najib when he next met his golfing buddy, the Post said, pointing out that Obama was still scheduled to visit Malaysia for an Asian summit in November, in which the free trade agreement would figure prominently, and which Obama hopes to make part of his legacy.

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