

# Air cleared over keris act

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## Umno and MCA Youth allay concerns

**PUTRAJAYA:** After a two-hour meeting with the Umno Youth chief, MCA Youth came out from the meeting with a better understanding why Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein brandished the keris at the Umno Youth meeting recently.

MCA Youth chief Datuk Liow Tiong Lai said the wing understood that the act was a symbol to show it was a trust for Hishammuddin to carry out his responsibilities to the nation.

"We raised our concern with Hishammuddin and after his explanation, the MCA now has full confidence that he will not use the keris against the Chinese or other races.

"I think the grassroots will understand," he said after leading his exco members to meet Hishammuddin at the Edu-

cation Ministry here yesterday.

Liow was responding to a question whether it would be easy for the MCA to allay the Chinese community uneasiness over Hishammuddin's act.

Hishammuddin, who was also present at the press conference, said it was the responsibility of all Youth leaders to reassure the Chinese community that they should not be uneasy.

"We discussed the keris. If you want to look at it negatively, of course you will say it is something to hurt. If you look at positively, you will see the responsibility of the person kissing the keris to carry out his duties," he explained.

"If he does not comply with it, the keris is used against him. In the process of getting it through to the people, of course we have

to face the sceptics out there. I hope the people will not see the keris as offensive or something to be feared."

Hishammuddin said a lesson to be learnt from the Umno assembly was that other races could see that the status of the Malays and religion were still sensitive matters.

"The meeting today was frank, and the explanations by both sides accepted. Our task now is to build a stronger bond and move forward," he added.

"My good relationship with MCA Youth is not built overnight. It took a lot of effort and I would like to translate it to Barisan Nasional Youth."

Liow said the MCA Youth was happy with the discussion and that other issues, including education, were also raised.