



Nothing wrong with being a Malay first, says PM

By Adib Zalkapli

First published in the Malaysian Insider

PUTRAJAYA, April 1 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak today defended his deputy's declaration that he considered himself "a Malay first", and only then a Malaysian, saying there isn't a contradiction.

“I think what he was saying reflects the provision in the constitution, the provision in the constitution is based on which ethnic group you belong to,” the prime minister said.

“He also said he is committed to 1 Malaysia, so I don’t see that as a contradiction. Being a Malay doesn’t mean you are against 1 Malaysia, similarly if you are a Malaysian Chinese, doesn’t mean you don’t think like a Malaysian or subscribe to 1 Malaysia,” he added.

Responding to a challenge from DAP’s Lim Kit Siang, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin yesterday said that it was not proper for him to identify himself as Malaysian first and Malay second.

Lim had earlier dared Muhyiddin to state that he was Malaysian first, and Malay second to prove that he did indeed believe in the concept of 1 Malaysia which had been Barisan Nasional’s “unifying” slogan.

Muhyiddin also described Lim’s challenge as an attempt to drive a wedge between him and

Najib.

“The question of 1 Malaysia should not be brought up. When a leader talks about the interest of his own race, it does not mean he doesn’t support 1 Malaysia. 1 Malaysia is based on the Constitution,” said Muhyiddin said yesterday.

“There is nothing wrong in leaders fighting for their own race. Don’t tell me Kit Siang does not fight for the Chinese?” he said.

Lim had also alleged that Muhyiddin had been making public statements that were in apparent conflict with Najib’s 1 Malaysia message forcing the Umno deputy president to declare his support to the campaign.

Najib introduced the 1 Malaysia concept when taking office last April 3, pledging to listen to the people and declaring that “the era where the government knows best is over”.

The opposition have called such initiatives populist moves to win back support for the BN which suffered unprecedented losses in Election 2008 in which Pakatan Rakyat (PR) captured four more states and 82 federal seats to deny the ruling coalition its customary two-thirds parliamentary majority.