

Ex-diplomat Razali admits being harsh in his new book - Nation | The Star Online

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by p. aruna

KUALA LUMPUR: Former diplomat Tan Sri Razali Ismail admits that he was very harsh in his thoughts about the United Nations in his new book.

Entitled *A UN Chronicle*, Razali talked about his experience and frustrations with the inter-governmental organisation during his 35 years with the Foreign Ministry.

"I have equated the UN to the music of Ravel's *Bolero*. The music goes up and down. There is no climax. It doesn't come to a conclusion. This is the UN," he said at the launch of his book yesterday.

The book is an account of his years at the UN beginning with his appointment as Malaysia's permanent representative to the UN (1988) until his tenure as UN secretary-general's special envoy for Myanmar (2000 to 2005).

Prior to his retirement from the diplomatic corps in 1998, Razali had been ambassador to Poland, high commissioner to India, ambassador to Cuba and several Caribbean nations before taking on the post of Malaysia's permanent representative to the UN based in New York.

Razali, 75, said it took him about a year to write the book with the assistance of co-author Sharifah Shifa al-Attas.

In the book, which is priced at RM100, Razali also talked about the relationship between the Foreign Ministry, the Prime Minister's Department and the Prime Minister at the time, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"It was a time when, in Malaysia, we felt how badly developing countries were treated and the politics of championing the rights of developing nations was one of the things I had to do there – and my boss made sure I did it.

"Given the responsibility, we spoke up, not just to promote Malaysia but because there were so many things not right in this world," he said.

The book was launched by Dr Mahathir who, in his speech, described Razali as someone who was always "able to deliver".

"He was not someone you would call very obedient though. He was very firm with his opinions and sometimes even forced me to accept his opinions," he said.