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Stop all intra-party strife, factionalism

S.F. Yong

THE previously silent Chinese majority translated their feelings into vocal action through the ballot box recently to enable a two-thirds victory for the Barisan Nasional because of their new faith and trust in the consolidated unity of parties like the MCA, Gerakan and Umno.

They were determined to maintain the spirit of understanding, shown by the founding leaders of our independence.

Intra-component party friction is one thing but inter-party friction within the BN is another.

The Chinese-based parties, in the light of present events, need to cohesively interact with each other so that the temporarily fractionalised Umno can re-strengthen itself and not be burdened by narrow Chinese component party rivalry.

The Prime Minister has enough issues on his hands - regenerating Umno, consolidating the BN, educating our younger generation and meeting the needs of the rural areas, irrespective of race, religion or political party.

The main task is for both the MCA and Gerakan to win back more Chinese voters, and perhaps even win over DAP, to turn it into a more circumspective party, whether it is in the opposition or not.

It is the responsibility of both MCA and Gerakan leaders to provide mutual assistance, wherever possible, especially to solve their respective internal problems by helping to mend cracks, not enlarge them.

They should not wait for the next election to jointly and constructively plan how and where they could complement one another to make inroads into the opposition strongholds - not by rhetorics but through historical enlightenment and realistic and sincere community work.

The latest reaction of the DAP to the Alternative Front's member, Pas, on their proposed statutory proposals in Terengganu seems to be an attempt to recover from what was not only a tactical but also a strategic error.

They may never recover their image and the political magnetism of the past.

Pas cannot be faulted because it has never hidden its true intentions to set up an Islamic State.

Pas merely agreed to cast a coloured veil over its intentions, in order to lend credibility to the DAP for the elections.

Umno had warned and cautioned against this probable development.

However, the DAP and Keadilan, supported by non-governmental organisation elements, disgruntled government servants and an emergent new generation of idealistic or historically under-informed youth and professional academicians, led an onslaught on the BN which has certainly caused much distress to our incumbent Government.

Changes have to come but certain core national principles and values cannot be altered in the changing world as we prepare for the new millennium.

We agree that Pas has strategically become a greater winner than possible but this was done only with the help from the DAP.

The Chinese voters did punish the DAP but also helped to bring about BN's victory, even though narrowly, in a number of areas. Otherwise, Pas' presence would have been omnipotent in more constituencies.

We do not believe that Umno will be dishonourable to component party members now or in the future.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is not just the emotive leader of a single race but the reaffirmed leader of the majority of Malaysians.

As the Prime Minister of Malaysia, he is respected by developing countries as a charismatic and inspiring leader, and admired as to how he has managed to find a pragmatic solution to the many problems while governing so diverse a nation.

If anyone can bring about a truly Malaysian nation, it will be Dr Mahathir and, after his lifetime, those who believe in his visions.

We also believe his future successor will be Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

At this stage, we would like to ask Keadilan, which had garnered some Chinese and Indian support, and Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail, as to where they now stand in respect of the unveiled intentions of Pas in establishing an Islamic state.

You were supposed to stand for universal and equal rights for all.

Keadilan members must now reconsider their position, as the DAP is doing, to ensure a more pragmatic future for all races in the country.

They must work towards a nation that in time will politically not be unrealistically pivoted by race or religion.

Our Constitution has already stated that the official religion will be Islam. Socially and economically, it will provide for a correction of imbalances, irrespective of race.

To the MCA, Gerakan, DAP and Keadilan, we appeal to you to look beyond the present in broader perspectives, whatever the inflicted hurts or sensitivities may be in the past, for a truly united nation.

The Seattle World Trade Organisation fiasco is manifestly clear. The intentions of the next round of talks by the entrenched countries will be the same but the packing may be more colourfully attractive.

Globalisation will not be so harmful but can be beneficial if we are sufficiently aware, wise, compromisingly smart and, above all, united.