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Rejuvenated leader with a difference

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MALAYSIAN Chinese and other Malaysians welcome the decision of Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik to remain in the Cabinet because they know that solidarity within the MCA, BN and the Government is all important.

Dr Ling's action makes him clearly and transparently a master politician and reinforces his dominance within the MCA. It takes all sides to agree to maintain political peace within the party and what the MCA needs and hopes for is goodwill on the part of everyone to resolve remaining misunderstandings.

How fully I agree with Dr Ling's decision. Somehow, my intuition did not desert me. I knew from the beginning that Dr Ling would not leave the Cabinet, which he has served with distinction for 14 years.

A senior contact in the Cabinet told me, "Liong Sik is a very good Minister, an understanding colleague and easy to get along with because each of us is given proportionate space in good and bad times".

Dr Ling's statement on his decision to remain in the Cabinet appropriately reflects the feelings of his party, the Chinese community, BN leaders and other Malaysians generally.

Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, however, insisted it was a strategic political move to resolve the MCA's internal problems. Be that as it may, what will follow can only strengthen Dr Ling's leadership and the MCA.

More importantly, Dr Ling's decision has been overwhelmingly welcomed and commented upon approvingly.

Dr Ling has a straightforward, patriotic honesty which has distinguished him from several of his past and current brothers-in-politics. If I can summarise about Dr Ling: He has been the "donkey of MCA, the Chinese and Malaysian political realism", and I know that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad likes and respects him.

As Dr Lee Kam Heng wrote in The Star (June 4), "the MCA influence in the Government might be weakened if its president is not in the Cabinet". No one will disagree with that.