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DAP's sixth sense

WE have been treated to weeks of vintage Karpal Singh, DAP deputy president, with his Bonaparte-like chin-raising and Hamlet-like declaration that DAP has no option but to leave the opposition front. Then, there's PAS deputy president Abdul Hadi Awang, his bulbous eyes gleaming defiantly as he challenged Karpal to pronounce the `talak' (divorce).

Let us not delude ourselves by thinking that this clash is merely over PAS' insistence on turning Malaysia into an Islamic state if the opposition front forms the Federal Government. After all, the so-called rift between DAP and PAS over the establishment of a theocratic state is nothing new. Years ago, Karpal declared that PAS could only do so over his dead body. But today, he sings his objection to the tune of "public interest". In 1995, DAP pulled out from the opposition pact over this issue.

Consider this: PAS has always been consistent on the question of Islamic state and so has DAP in its objection to it. Then or now, there has never been any understanding reached on the question of theocracy. Therefore, there is no rift to speak of in the first place. Going by the past, the issue was exploited whenever DAP wanted to have the upper hand in the pact or walk out from it. It is a sixth sense. It knows it is in dire straits now. As the Malay saying goes, "tinggal mati, keluarpun mati" (either way, it's the death knell).

It knows that it cannot be seen to call it quits purely on the premise of a weakening position in the pact to the point it no longer has any bargaining power. That would be a plain admittance of defeat. It must walk out, yes, but not without salvaging its dignity. Thus, it raises the issue.

There is more to the imbroglio than a clash of ideological egoism. It knows that there is no hope of seeing its ideological construct, Malaysian Malaysia, dominating the opposition front. PAS and Parti Keadilan Nasional reject it. Not only that. This time around, DAP senses that it is behind time for many of its members doubt the integrity of its peculiar concoction of Malaysian Malaysia. The truth is: It is in an ideological vortex, trapped in Lim Kit Siang's time-bomb which never did explode.

Its innate knowledge tells it that it has failed in making PAS realise that although coalitions are necessary, they are not bought on the cheap or solely on a single party's own terms.

As orthodox as they come, Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz and Hadi will only accept a purist Islamic state. Keadilan deputy president Dr Chandra Muzaffar is wrong in thinking that the extraction of principles central to Islam and their modification to modern times will suffice for PAS.

What breed of coalition politics does the Opposition practise? We say it is a coalition of exploitations whereby PAS exploits Keadilan on the Anwar issue to gain a larger percentage of the Malay vote bank and DAP for the non-Malay votes.

DAP wants to ride to power on the shoulders of PAS and Keadilan, not realising the erosion of its political authority. Keadilan epitomises the maxim that the ends justify the means. Barisan Alternatif is, as Barisan Nasional president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says, Barisan Tiruan. A poor imitation; a floundering coalition cemented only by

the burning desire for electoral triumph.
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