

25/12/2001

Moment of reckoning

GOING by the recent bullying bluster, provocative postures and mixture of ruthless guile and pious populism, it seems that the current feud in MCA threatens to turn the party into a craven caricature of its original self.

Personality clashes are periodic in MCA. However, policy disagreements have intensified the rivalry between Team A and Team B this time around, so much so that the grassroots is demoralised. Still, as observed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the problem is not as serious as Umno's 1987 crisis. It will not lead to party desertions.

The warring leaders must realise the futility of fighting. More so when there are people who have a vested interest in splitting the party. The protagonists, Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and Datuk Lim Ah Lek, should take credible steps to resolve their differences and more important, forge a collective leadership, at least until the next party polls. Let the delegates then decide.

A mediator - someone with an enormous fund of goodwill, possibly a respectable non-partisan member of the Chinese community whose consensual approach will prevent the hysteria and paranoia that accompanied past peacemaking efforts - should be brought in to end the feud and bring about unity, which is imperative to consolidate the Chinese votes in Barisan Nasional's votebank.

MCA must ask itself whether it will allow personality clashes to stand in the way of its political fortunes. It must bear in mind there are no silver medals in an election.

(END)