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Joining up against political delusion

IT was double-speak. Hate propaganda had demanded that Pas never believed Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad would keep his promise to step down on Oct 31. Instead of eating its words, the Opposition party now claims that it had forced Dr Mahathir to resign by repeatedly asserting that he would never leave office. In proposing such a preposterous idea, Pas spiritual leader Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat may have handed more praise to Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi than he ever meant to. The Prime Minister could prove to be a bigger nemesis than his combative predecessor.

At the point of his departure, Dr Mahathir still held the mandate of the nation and his party in his secure grip. The suggestion that he could have given in to the exhortations of an extremist minority is a deliberate delusion by a political party that is bankrupt of constructive ideas and led by an infantile and wishful leadership. Kelantan is a prime example of Pas' unrelentingly clumsy attempts at government. After 13 years under Nik Aziz, which is already more than half the duration of Dr Mahathir's premiership, the State has seen nothing short of stagnation. As such, what the Prime Minister urges the leaders and members of Umno becomes of paramount importance. Umno has the upper hand and must not waste this advantage through complacency.

Abdullah wants his party to stop the internal politicking and get on with the work of serving the people. Umno must thus make itself over and foster a new spirit of co-operation among its members, which will give it the desired image of a party consistently committed to the people rather than just winning elections. But both will be served by a concerted effort by the membership to ensure the completion of projects to improve the lives of the electorate. Umno owes it to the people to behave in the manner of a ruling party of long tenure whose lustre has not diminished. Should it not see and implement its purpose in these terms, Pas' double-speak could dupe more voters into unravelling the progress that we have today.