

'Yes, more must be done to solve Umno's woes'

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by Hazlan Zakaria

Umno deputy president Muhyiddin Yassin concurs with Dr Mahathir Mohamad that the party is still the best, despite the internal squabbles, but insists that the issues are being addressed.

"We all know that after Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak took over from his predecessor Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, there were problems, internal squabbles, for one, as well as problems in preparing the next generation of leaders.

"However, to say that the party is not moving (at all) to address the problem is not accurate. But I believe that not enough is being done. More needs to be done," Muhyiddin told a press conference in Bangi today.

However, Muhyiddin welcomed the admonitions by Mahathir, who led the party for 22 years before handing over to Abdullah in 2003. He said Mahathir still cared for the party and only wanted to see it stay relevant and lead the government.

"There is no malice in his admonitions and we must give serious attention to the issues he highlighted," said Muhyiddin, who is also deputy prime minister and education minister.

'No separation between party, govt'

The Pagoh MP added that in managing internal party strife, it was important point to remember that Umno was inseparable from the government.

"When the premier, who is party president, makes a government decision, it is based on the party's decisions and views. You cannot separate the party from the government," reasoned the Umno No 2.

Asked about the jockeying and lobbying by Umno leaders for candidacy in the coming elections, Muhyiddin said they are the norm in all political parties.

"Even the opposition has the same issues. When it is near elections, everyone wants to stand as candidate. The important thing is to manage the issue properly," he explained.

Muhyiddin was responding to scathing remarks mahathir made over the weekend in an interview with Umno-owned Utusan Malaysia, where the former party president labelled the Malay party as "weak," rife with "internal squabbles" and suffering from dearth of capable leadership.

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