

Tee Keat: I'm a negative example for Najib
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INTERVIEW Prime Minister and Umno President Najib Abdul Razak may be striving to convince his party into adopting the moderate approach, but former MCA president Ong Tee Keat thinks that Umno has in reality moved more towards the right.

Speaking to *Malaysiakini* last week, he said Umno is doing this because of pressure from within and without, forcing the party to shore up its community support base.

While Ong agrees that Najib may have intentions to reform his party as well as the BN, Umno, however, may not always stick to his reform plan, especially under the watch of pressure groups like Perkasa.

He was asked to comment on the difference among three prime ministers Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Najib.

"Mahathir was a very strong and dominant leader. But at least, he could always give you an answer even when facing an explosive and controversial issue. But, of course, he is a controversial leader as well.

"Abdullah is a good old man. He may not give you a clear answer but he can understand your limitations and grievances.

"As for the current prime minister, I can see that he wants to do something and reform. But on the road to reform, you have to face pressure from within and without the party.

"Under such circumstances, you may not always stick to your own way," said Ong, who had served as minister and deputy minister under the three premiers.

He said under the current delegates system, even a prime minister and the BN president may not survive if party support is lost.

"You are not only the government chief executive, but also the party chief. You have to face the pressure within your own party, and if you cannot sustain your party support, you may lose your government position."

Islamic state issue little impact

Ong, who had pushed for the probe into the Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) scandal during his tenure as transport minister, went on to mock himself, saying he is a negative example for Najib.

The MCA maverick was involved in a protracted power struggle with Dr Chua Soi Lek (*right*), who was then his deputy, culminating with Chua's expulsion from the party for damaging the party's image when a video tape of him having sex was widely circulated.

However in 2009, Chua's supporters succeeding in reinstating him as deputy who then went on to oust Ong the following year, after the party's central committee resigned en masse, triggering an extraordinary general meeting.

Ong has since kept out of the party's internal politics, choosing instead to focus on his [constituency](#).

One and a half years after being thrown out as president, Ong did not want



to comment on the future of the MCA and the BN.

However he opined that MCA will not stand to gain much support by continuing to harp on the Islamic state issue, the main campaign theme set by his successor.

He said the rakyat cares more about the corruption and power abuse rather than islamic state issue.

"Many arguments today have been raised in 1990s before. I don't think this can make any impact despite the Chinese-based rulling parties continue to harp on this issue,

"Some may think that what you are saying is illusory, we don't know whether this will be implemented or not. But corruption and power abuse are the problems we can feel."

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