

**Ku Li in comfort zone, will not quit Umno**  
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Despite the differences of views with Umno leadership, Umno veteran Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah says he will not follow the steps of his colleague Kadir Sheikh Fadzir to quit the party.

tengku razaleigh ku li interview 190309 04In an exclusive interview with Chinese Oriental Daily News published today, the Gua Musang MP (right) maintained his loyalty to Umno and expressed satisfaction with his current status in the party.

"I'm still free to do things and say things I want in Umno. Although some of my statements will make some people in Umno unhappy, that does not mean I should leave Umno," he was quoted as saying.

He likened the situation to the relationship of two brothers in a family who sometimes quarrelled with each other but that does not mean they must disown each other.

The former finance minister is currently the president of Amanah, a NGO founded by him together with other current and former BN leaders.

Last week Kadir Sheikh, one of Amanah deputy presidents and also a former Umno minister, resigned from the party that he had joined for 56 years.

This followed attacks by Umno leaders and mainstream media over his allegations that Umno leaders were involved in vote-buying.

On the role of Amanah, Razaleigh said the public perception that it will serve as a third force in the Malaysian political landscape was a misunderstanding because he has no intention to fight BN or Umno through Amanah.

NONEHe said the NGO was initiated by Kadir Sheikh (right) and others, and he reluctantly accepted the presidency after they aggressively lobbied him.

Describing his presidency as a figure head, Razaleigh said he is ready to vacate the post at anytime if there was a more suitable candidate.

The group, however, is not as active as presumed by some quarters, he said.

"I attended the launching but after that we did not do much. The major reason is we are too busy."

Although most of the members want Amanah to be registered as a political party and play a significant role in the next general election, Razaleigh held a contrary stand: "I'm one of the minority who opposed it because I'm already a Umno member. I can't be a member of two political parties."

"Some people think I should quit Umno but I have been active in Umno for almost 50 years," he continued, reiterating that he has no intention at all to leave the ruling party.

Dual-party membership disallowed

He clarified that he and his colleagues in Umno did not quit the party in 1987, instead they had no choice but to form Semangat 46 because they were not allowed by the then prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad to join the 'new Umno' founded by Mahathir when the original Umno was declared illegal by the court.

After the 1995 general election, Mahathir requested that they return to Umno, hence they dissolved Semangat 46, he said.

Asked why Semangat 46 was dissolved, Razaleigh simply answered that it was because a person is not allowed to have dual-party membership.

There was neither any promise by Mahathir nor any request by him when both factions reunited.

NONE On the allegations that Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim (left) approached him and other BN parliamentarians to join Pakatan Rakyat to topple the federal government on Sept 16, 2008, Razaleigh denied it.

He said Anwar did engage him to form a new government but did not lobby him to join Pakatan.

“At that time I told him I will not follow him. I will continue to stay in Umno and I wished him good luck.

“I also advised him not to be over confident because these people (BN MPs) will change their mind anytime and he may be disappointed.

“But Anwar replied that he will continue to push for it.

“Looking back now, I was right. The plan was indeed hard to be realised,” Razaleigh revealed.

NONE On Anwar’s ability, Razaleigh said he is an outstanding politician who can unite all the three opposition parties but his governing capacity has yet to be tested.

Contrary to the popular perception, Razaleigh commented that the Achilles’ heel of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak’s administration is the concept of 1Malaysia.

“Many people will ask if you really believe in 1Malaysia, why there are still so many racial issues?”

Although Najib (right) is a hardworking politician, Razaleigh noted, one of his biggest challenges is to address the problems inherited from the previous administration, including discriminatory policies, corruption and substandard public delivery system.

“Take the political party as an example. Some people may ask, how can you promote 1Malaysia when the party you lead, that is Umno, is still a racial party?”



