

Nik Aziz okays Pakatan review but rules out exit

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PAS spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, a staunch backer of Pakatan Rakyat, has okayed a review of PAS' position in the alliance but put the lid on a possible exit of the party.

Any review, said the veteran PAS leader, should only be directed at strengthening cooperation within Pakatan and not to the detriment of the political pact.

"...If want to review, go ahead. But review only for improving, not review to go backwards.

NONE"Review to go backwards is only to give a lifeline to Umno that is drowning," he said in a Facebook statement today.

He was responding to PAS Ulama chief Harun Taib (right) who called for a review of PAS relationship to Pakatan Rakyat after the Islamist party regressed in the 13th general election.

Harun had blamed the party's over-tolerance to the demands of non-Muslims that led to its erosion of Malay support.

Even though an ulama himself, Nik Abdul Aziz has had divergent views with the religious scholars' wing and is instead a strong advocate for cooperation with PKR and DAP.

He has consistently shot down overtures between his lieutenants and Umno, mindful of their bitter cooperation that ended with a power struggle in 1978.

PAS was ousted from its power base of Kelantan after it exited BN and took 12 years before it managed to return to power.

Nik Abdul Aziz, who is former Kelantan menteri besar, stressed that staying in Pakatan is the right decision.

"True that we want to achieve victory in the general election, but remember that PAS as an Islamic movement also carries the responsibility of carrying Islam on the political stage.

"Therefore, PAS' presence in Pakatan Rakyat has never been a mistake. In fact, it is the right step in line with national political realities," he said.

He added that PAS should also work harder to foster understanding towards Islam by non-Muslims.

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