

Challenge Najib for top post, Muhyiddin told
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Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin should mount a leadership challenge against his boss, said former minister Zaid Ibrahim.

He said it would be better for Muhyiddin to lock horns with Najib Abdul Razak in a contest instead of attempting to shake the latter by questioning policies and decisions supported in the cabinet.

"Even if he loses, the party will be stronger and better for it. Most probably, there will be no actual contest and the PM will gracefully make way for him to take over in 2017.

"That's what we call a 'win-win situation' in this blessed country," he added.

Zaid was responding to Muhyiddin's remarks during a recent speech regarding another racial riot taking place, which invited a barrage of criticism.

The ex-minister quoted Muhyiddin as lamenting, "every night before I sleep, I think about how to manage the country. Someone sent me a message asking me what will happen to the Malays, and why Islam is being insulted, and other issues..."

Zaid also noted how certain quarters attempted to deflect the damage by claiming that Muhyiddin had issued a reminder and not a threat.

"The people are not as stupid as these ministers think, for we know the difference between a veiled threat and friendly advice from a senior national leader," he added in his blog.

As for Muhyiddin's sleepless nights, Zaid believes that what is keeping him awake is the fact that Najib is growing stronger by the day.

"At least that's how it looks from where I am sitting, and the deputy is feeling frustrated that his chances of becoming PM are being thwarted bit by bit.

"His erstwhile allies in Umno seem to be unbelievably quiet and the PM has been able to deal with these groups well. As you know, our PM is adept at taking care of those within the party who have grouses," he said.

Muhyiddin has a dilemma

Continuing his analogy, Zaid claimed that Muhyiddin's frustration could also be related to the dilemma of being bound by cabinet decisions but disagreeing with them in some

fundamental way.

"Let me illustrate: When the cabinet allowed Christians to import the Al Kitab from Indonesia way back in the late 1980s, the cabinet was already aware that the word Allah was used in the Bible.

"Throughout the 1990s, the practice of closing one eye to the use of the word Allah was routine. The 10-point plan to resolve the issue meant that the cabinet had agreed on its use.

"The courts have also decided on the Allah issue. In other words, the Christian issue is somewhat settled. Why then must the DPM keep talking about it unless he disagrees with Najib on the whole handling of the Allah issue?" he added.

About the Malays, Zaid said the DPM surely knows that with Umno's role as guardian and protector, it is impossible for the Malays to be anything but glorious and powerful.

"To suggest otherwise is to imply that Umno has failed, which is a serious accusation against your own party.

"Perhaps what the DPM really wanted to say was under Najib, only some Malays have been given protection and thus the policies of the PM will not be good for the Malays and the country in the long term," he added.

However, Zaid said he was disappointed that the DPM resorted to the May 13 incident to make his point about Najib's weaknesses and failures.

"There is nothing to be proud of in May 13 and certainly nothing that warrants reminding people about it constantly.

"The solution is simple: the DPM must announce his intention to challenge the PM for the presidency of Umno," he added.

Furthermore, he said a leadership challenge in Umno is long overdue.

"Najib has not really been tested within Umno, and the DPM may have a good chance of unseating him... There is no need to use issues that can tear the nation apart when what is needed is a simple leadership contest," he added.