Daim: Umno's support for PM may be superficial
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Former finance minister Daim Zainuddin has warned that the outpouring of support for Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak may not be genuine.

He pointed out that in Umno, it was the norm for members to publicly pledge loyalty to a president who still wields power but this may not reflect their true sentiment.

"If someone becomes president and wields power, in front, of course they (Umno members) will support.

"But at the back, we do not know. That has been Umno's way," he said in an interview with Malaysia Gazette.

He cited the example of former prime ministers Tunku Abdul Rahman and Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, whom he pointed out received support but were eventually ousted.

"In front, they may be loyal to leaders but when the time comes, they start panicking, they become desperate.

"...When that time comes, then they will take action," he said.

However, Daim said he is concerned that it may be too late.

Several BN and Umno leaders have come out in support of Najib after former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad launched a broadside against the prime minister.

Among Mahathir's unhappiness with Najib includes issues concerning 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), the government's purchase of a luxury jet and the murder of Altantuya Shaariibuu.

Conflict of interest

Weighing into 1MDB, Daim said there was a conflict of interest with Najib also being the finance minister, who automatically chairs the advisory board of the debt-ridden firm.

"If the finance minister makes a mistake, but he is also the prime minister, then you can't even tell him off or sack him.

"If the finance minister is someone else, we can take action.

"Now it is difficult because the finance minister is also the advisor to 1MDB, which has more than RM42 billion in debt.

"This is a big problem, I don't know, he (Najib) should think deeply what is best for the country," he added.

Daim (left) also stressed that the auditor-general's office's investigation into 1MDB should not take long as it is more than capable of probing numerous government-linked companies within a year.

He also attributed the weak ringgit to a lack of investor confidence due to the government flip-flopping on issues, including 1MDB.

"How are people going to believe if we keep giving the wrong answers. How are people going to trust us?" he asked.

Daim gave the example of 1MDB's denial that billionaire T Ananda Krishnan did not help the company on its loan only to have the government inform Parliament later that the businessman had helped to source for 1MDB's funds.

"If we keep giving wrong answers then it will raise many questions," he said.

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