Muhyiddin dejected over what is happening in Umno
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INTERVIEW Former deputy prime minister and Pagoh MP Muhyiddin Yassin is very dejected by the current state of affairs in Umno, the party that suspended him as its deputy president.

In an exclusive interview with Malaysiakini, Muhyiddin said he has been with Umno for 45 years, has been a loyal party member and that his struggle has not been for himself.

“My struggle has always been towards the people's interests and well-being.

“However, looking at the present situation, the issues plaguing the party as a result of the alleged wrongdoings of the prime minister and party president (Najib Abdul Razak), resulting in the people becoming angry, would bring a negative impact to the party.

“If I do not do something, I am concerned that the situation would become worse, and that is something that is now always lingering on my mind,” Muhyiddin said in the interview at Bukit Damansara.

He further questioned whether what he has done has been against God's law, or if he had committed a sin.

Muhyiddin said his father, a religious teacher, had taught him that in any struggle, it is not about one’s self or what one wants but whatever one does should be in the interests of the people.

When it was pointed out to him that he appeared to be the lone voice in the wilderness within Umno and BN, except for several branches and his Pagoh division, Muhyiddin said he was puzzled by this.

“Sometimes I am dumbfounded when Umno faces a leadership crisis that is as bad as this. It is as if Umno members do not realise it, or are in a trance. I do not want to make any allegations of imbuhan (impetus given), resulting in them sidestepping the struggle.

“We should struggle on the right path. Are they not aware that what Najib is doing is destroying the country? Do they not realise that the government is bearing a heavy burden as a result of the 1MDB scandal? I feel they realise this, but are thinking about their own self-interests.

They may be thinking what they could get, and if there is someone who is willing to give, they are willing to do away with their struggle, added the party deputy president, who was suspended on Feb 26 because he did not perform his duties according to the party

constitution.

“I am puzzled that at a time which requires us to be extremely brave and thinking, they think if they do this, they would be punished like Muhyiddin. Hence, there is a feeling of fear engulfing the party, fearing punishment that if they do not support the present leadership, disciplinary action would be taken.

“But this is what we should struggle for, what is right should be followed and what is wrong should be rejected. Unfortunately, this does not happen and as a result, I am dejected with the state of affairs in Umno now,” he said.

Follow the leader if he does not deviate

Muhyiddin reminded Muslims and Umno members of a verse in the Quran, in the An Nisa chapter that says:

“O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the messenger (Prophet Muhammad) and those of you who are in authority; and if ye have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the messenger if ye are (in truth) believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more seemly in the end.”

Muhyiddin said if there was a dispute with the leader or person in authority, then one should advise and this was practised by the first caliph, Abu Bakar, who told the congregation in the mosque after Prophet Muhammad had passed away, and he took over the leadership, that if he deviated, they should correct him.

“Even when conducting solat (prayers) if the imam recites wrongly, those behind him can correct the imam. If the imam continues to make mistakes, then you can abandon him and find someone else to lead the prayers,” he said.

Asked how many times he had tried to advise Najib, the former deputy prime minister replied “many times”, in the cabinet and outside, since last year.

Different from Pak Lah

Muhyiddin said he has no intention of seeing Umno or BN fall in the next general election.

“I told my detractors that when I asked Pak Lah (former Umno president and former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, photo) to make way for Najib takeover, was there a change of government?

“I then saw that in the 2008 general election, the trend was not encouraging and we lost our two-thirds majority in Parliament, with the support from the people having declined.

“The reason is attributed to the weak leadership of the PM at that time. If there was no

intervention for the change in leadership, then we (Umno and BN) would have lost. I struggled for it and Pak Lah withdrew, with Najib taking over. Then, was there a change of government?" he asked.

There was no change of government, the Pagoh MP pointed out, but only a change in the Umno leadership.

"The same modus operandi is applied here. The only difference is the people are different now and what is happening within Umno is not like before. We are now faced with a problematic scandal that has never taken place before in the history of the party.

"As an Umno leader, I am afraid that if this is allowed to go on and there is no intervention, then Umno would be burdened and BN would lose the next election.

"The burdens faced by the country and people and others are heavy. I have no intention of changing the government, but just the leadership. He should give consideration and give way to prevent the party from descending further."

Muhyiddin felt such an initiative was necessary as he held a key post in the party… and they know that what he said is correct.

"Although my voice is considered something in the wilderness, it is heard. Similarly, like (former prime minister) Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who holds the same view. We feel that the people must understand this," he added.

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