

Dr M and Anwar show truly, no permanent enemies in politics
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ANALYSIS The reconciliatory handshake between former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad and jailed PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim - whom he had sacked as his deputy and vilified 18 years ago - is proof that there are truly no permanent enemies in politics, analysts said.

Political analyst Associate Prof Ahmad Ghazali Abu Hassan said he viewed the occasion as a healthy development, and a sign of a matured democracy.

“They may (still) have differences in their political views, but they are united on grounds of national interest.

“It does not mean their political differences no longer exist. The differences will still be there,” said Ahmad Ghazali who heads the International Security and Defence Research Centre at Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia.

He added that he viewed the meeting in the context of upholding the nation’s dignity, instead of just for political reasons.

“I also feel that if they unite and work together in the interest of the nation, that is when we have reached a level of political maturity,” he told *Malaysiakini* yesterday.

Mahathir yesterday made a surprise appearance at the High Court in Kuala Lumpur, in support of Anwar’s bid to challenge the National Security Council Act 2016, arriving together with PKR deputy president Azmin Ali and former Umno division leader Khairuddin Abu Hassan.

The two leaders shook hands and later had a 30-minute meeting that touched on various current issues.

Mahathir’s presence was also seen as giving moral support to Anwar, since they were now both on the same side, opposing Najib.

Ahmad, meanwhile, also said he viewed this as a sign of new future political collaborations.

“What they are doing now, they may want to unite and show a clear message to the people, but I feel that it is most important that everybody must state their own stand, yet be willing to set aside political differences,” he said.

‘Symbolic move to forget the past’

National Professors Council member Associate Prof Mustafa Ishak said the meeting should be seen as a symbolic gesture that signalled a readiness to forget their history.

“The two leaders are starting a new political chapter that cannot be taken lightly by Umno-BN and they (Umno-BN) should view this as a serious threat in the next general election,” he said.

Mustafa also reiterated the popular perception that there were no permanent allies or enemies in politics.

“Allies, friends and enemies can change in the blink of an eye in order to achieve and further their (political) interests,” said Mustaffa who heads the council’s politics, security and international affairs cluster.

He added that while their reconciliation was not a surprising development as anything was possible in politics, it would still leave a significant impact on the country.

Political analyst Ahmad Atory Hussain attributed the situation to mounting pressure for a united opposition against Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

“Those in the opposition, including Tun (Mahathir) are now willing to reconcile their differences to face a common enemy.

“It is also possible that Anwar’s (current) incarceration is due to a political conspiracy, which maybe Mahathir is only now aware of,” he said.