

ADUN SPEAKS | A serious political drama is unfolding in our country

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ADUN SPEAKS | The political drama that is unfolding is not going to benefit the rakyat.

Something serious is unfolding in Malaysia and it could have major repercussions on the ability of the PN government to contain the Covid-19 pandemic.

This is none other than the continuing tussle between Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin and the attempt by Umno headed by Ahmad Zahid Hamidi to unseat the government.

The continuing drama has taken a new dimension, with the recent appointments of Defence Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob as the deputy prime minister and Foreign Minister Hishammuddin Hussein as the senior minister in the cabinet.

The fact that Muhyiddin could deliver this announcement from his hospital bed goes to indicate the seriousness of the rift between Umno and the Bersatu leader.

Being confined to the hospital was no barrier to Muhyiddin to thwart the political designs of Umno, at least the faction headed by Zahid, its current president.

Of course, it is evident that there is a group of Umno MPs who are not with Zahid. They would prefer to stick with Muhyiddin to have ready access to the sinew of the office.

Although the Umno supreme council, as a whole, might go along with Zahid, unity among the Umno MPs and those holding positions in the present government might be a suspect.

In this sense, Umno's decision to pull out of the government and call for the resignation of Muhyiddin might not have the desired effect.

Umno MPs in Parliament in 2019 - before several of them quit Umno

As long as a sizeable number of Umno MPs, especially those holding positions in the government, are with Muhyiddin, the government might not be toppled that easily.

What former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad could not do during his second term in office, Muhyiddin has done it by splitting Umno.

In this regard, Muhyiddin is much more crafty and politically shrewd than Mahathir, the man who is silently praying to make a comeback in Malaysian politics.

Although Umno is putting out a front that it is going all out to bring down the government of Muhyiddin, in reality, the battle is between the two factions in Umno, those with Muhyiddin and those aligned with Zahid.

It is not clear whether Zahid has the full backing of all those in Umno, particularly those who have benefited by virtue of holding positions.

In fact, there are already moves among certain Umno MPs to distance themselves from Zahid and to move closer to the comfort zone of Muhyiddin.

Some of these MPs might not be happy with Zahid for his alleged rapprochement with PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim to form the next government.

Muhyiddin's party Bersatu has no standing in Malay politics.

Without the lifeline thrown by Umno and PAS, the party might just wither away.

Bersatu needs the support of these parties more than they need Bersatu.

PAS is another story.

It has sacrificed its religious principles to blindly support the PN government.

More than this, it has clearly betrayed its “friend” Umno. The marriage of convenience to take on the earlier Pakatan Harapan government failed miserably.

With the Covid-19 pandemic raging, the question is whether Muhyiddin will have the strength to fight at two fronts.

If he cannot settle the political problem, he might not have any choice but to quit. But if the pandemic shows no sign of abating, Muhyiddin might as well throw in the towel.

He might be able to stave off a political challenge from Umno temporarily, but he has to manage and contain the pandemic.

However, to date, Muhyiddin and his ministers have done a poor job.

If the pandemic shows no signs of retreat, then Umno might end up flogging a dead horse.

Whether Umno can take on the PN government in general and Muhyiddin, in particular, might be checkmated by its own disunity.

Umno's preoccupation with securing state power to enjoy the benefits is the main reason why it is not able to checkmate Muhyiddin.

Moreover, given the fact that some of the Umno leaders have been implicated in financial scandals leading to court cases, the leadership simply lacks the legitimacy to take on the PN government.

As the pandemic is fiercely raging, let us find out how the political drama is going to be played out.

One thing is for sure: the rakyat would not be the beneficiaries of this political drama!

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