

Hasan and Harussani: Who's lying?

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COMMENT You got to hand it to the PAS crowd: when they squabble among themselves, those following the twists and turns of the quarrel are aided in arriving at a conclusion as to which side is more sinning than sinned against.

This is rather unlike political controversies that break out in other parties; smoke billows from inflammable material, shrouding the matter which ignited the troubles in the first place. In the enveloping fog, those who have tried to follow the trail are not left any wiser.

hasan ali umno pas selangor talk quality hotel 300708 01The controversy surrounding PAS' Selangor state exco member, Hasan Ali's meeting with Perak mufti Harussani Zakaria is a case in point of why it's rewarding to follow skirmishes within PAS: you get to end-point rather quickly and with a surer sense of who's at fault.

This is not to say that we should be rubbing our hands in glee over the precision of the fault-finding; rather, it is that in politics, better a controversy that yields light about its origins than one that issues in more obfuscation.

Harussani, who professes to be dismayed at the supposed lack of Malay/Muslim unity in the country, started the controversy when he said he had recently met up with Umno and PAS leaders who wanted unity talks between the two parties.

No mandate

That disclosure drew a sharp rebuke from PAS vice-presidents Salahuddin Ayob and Mahfuz Omar.

Harussani ZakariaThey accused the Perak mufti of fibbing about the PAS side of the alleged overture. They claimed that no PAS leader had met with Harussani and if one did, that person had no mandate to discuss unity talks with Umno.

These are the claims that either invite a quick backtrack by the original source of the story or trip him into a morass of exculpation.

Harussani chose the latter.

"I am a mufti, certainly I won't lie, it's just that I don't want to name the people who had come to meet me... so, I did not lie. If they want to accuse me of lying, that's up to them," the Perak mufti was quoted as saying.

SMS rumours

Never mind the Perak mufti had been less than responsible a few years ago when he circulated a rumour that several Muslims were going to be baptized in a church in Ipoh.

The story turned out to be false. You would have thought the incident would have brought chastisement from his employers.

The contrary took place: he went on to garner national honours. They say moral hazard occurs when there are incentives for perverse behaviour.

Now an emboldened Harussani has reached for the Holy Grail of Muslim unity.

But his erstwhile partner in the quest, Hasan Ali, has placed him on the spot: Hasan has admitted to

meeting Harussani but denied it was for the purpose of seeking his help in initiating unity talks with Umno.

Selangor PAS which presently obtained the admission from Hasan has now propelled both Hasan and Harussani into a corner.

You got to hand it to the PAS crowd: they don't quarrel heedlessly.

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