

PKR polls: Some nervous but see contest as inevitable
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PKR needs a leader in the No 2 slot at this stage of the country's political transition that knows the enemy and thus can prepare the party at crafting counter-strategy.

This is the composite opinion of a slew of elected representatives of the party who are well situated to see all the contours of a contest and welcome it as inevitable while discounting its divisive effects.

They see the enemy as Umno. They claim the wisdom of the Chinese saying: "Know thy enemy; a thousand battles, a thousand victories."

They spoke on background – "Why tip my hand when I don't see the eventual choice as definitive of a prime minister-designate," rationalised one rep when defending his stance of studied neutrality.

"Frankly, I haven't made up my mind as to who to vote for but I want to see a contest that is democratic and clean as we can possibly get," he offered.

azlanA contest for the deputy president's post is shaping up between incumbent vice-president Azmin Ali and the party's Pakatan Rakyat policy coordinator Zaid Ibrahim.

Party supporters are worried that a contest would accentuate factionalism and lead to interminable internal strife.

Others see the entire electoral exercise as offering a new paradigm for the resolution of intra-party rivalry and conflict, necessitating choice and requiring maturity and discipline in accepting the eventual verdict.

PKR has an electorate of something like 400,000. All are empowered to vote for their leaders, from the divisional stage to the national hierarchy.

"The entire party is going through a unique election process in which every member is empowered to make a choice," opined another rep.

"We must see a contest for the deputy presidency as allowing this process to reach the penultimate slot in the hierarchy. What an exercise in member empowerment!" he enthused.

"The contest comes at a stage when we have to sharpen for a watching public our differences to our adversary Umno-BN, where choice in these matters is imposed or insinuated rather than emerging from the members themselves," he elaborated.

Self-delusion?

"Let's face it," offered a third rep, "PKR wants to project itself as the leading party in Malaysian politics for self-determination on the issues of the day by the people. It believes in that way lies wisdom."

He added: "Umno-BN pretends to allow for choice by the governed but this choice is

pre-determined by the controls imposed on its exercise.”

azlan“PKR has elected to be wholly different. I know that claim may be self-delusion, but at least we are out to realise our ideals. I also know realities are always defeating ideals but ideals have a way of getting their own back at reality.

“We must leave it to the members and allow them to feel and exercise their right of choice. The entire experience is going to mature them.”

Another rep cautioned against the thinking that the contest for deputy president meant that the winner would be prime minister-designate.

“This is a premature reading. You misread the dynamics of free choice that is exercised at periodic intervals if you think that a choice made in 2010 will be re-endorsed in 2013,” he commented.

“You can't blame people for thinking in these static terms. They have never before seen popular sovereignty exercised to this extent in a political party. That is why this occasion of PKR's internal electoral exercise represents a paradigm shift in Malaysian politics,” he asserted.

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