

Mujahid: Umno 'hijacking' PAS ideology
Malaysiakini.com
Disember 14, 2010

There is a perception that Umno appears to presenting a more Islamic face recently and is attempting to 'hijack' the ideology of PAS.

NONEBut Penang PAS deputy commissioner Mujahid Yusuf Rawa (right) sees this more as political expediency on Umno's part rather than coming from a true belief in Islam.

Mujahid, who is Parit Buntar MP, said according to public perception, Umno appears to have chosen the 'extreme path', while PAS has chosen the middle ground.

"But Umno has chosen to be extreme not because it believes it is right, but out of political interest to capture the Malay ground," said the PAS national unity movement chief.

"However, if you ask the Malays, no matter how extreme Umno is, they will just laugh... it is true, if an Umno person wants to be a good Muslim, people will laugh.. this happens even in the rural areas," he added.

He may utter a liberal statement like: non-Muslims can enter mosques but since he is from PAS, it would be acceptable, he added.

"If PAS says it, people perceive it to be right... since they (PAS people) are perceived to be better versed (in Islam) or look more pious compared to an Umno person.

Controlling extremism

On a question about how the party intends to control extremism in its midst, Mujahid said it had a system to ensure that members do not get out of hand.

For example, he said that in any party, including Umno, it was normal to have different types of members: conservatives, reformists or those who chose to stay in the middle.

However, in PAS, members hold on to the party's ideology as it is closely binded to Islamic principles, based on knowledge of the Al-Quran and Hadith.

"Whenever any confusion arises, we go back to the teachings to explain to the members... we have a very strong inner circle system," he said.

"Our branches have usrah (family group discussion) which does not only discuss political issues but the Hadith and there are religious teachers to guide them," he added.

"We also have religious lectures which explain the teachings of Islam. Whether PAS wins or loses, these sessions continue. It's a culture that has been around for the past 30 years".

pas muktamar 130610 nik abdul aziz nik mat 1To curb discontent within the party, Mujahid said there are channels where members can air their dissatisfaction.

However, there is a sense of loyalty towards the party leadership, especially towards spiritual leader and Kelantan Menteri Besar Nik Aziz Nik Mat (left), he noted.

"But if you have a problem, you can talk to him and he will give his advice so it doesn't spread (the discontent); that is the advantage of PAS which you cannot find anywhere else," he added.

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