

Ku Li calls for a party purge
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Umno can only be saved if the "bad, corrupt, uncultured, immoral and unwise" people at the top are purged, said party veteran and Gua Musang Umno division chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah today. MCPX

umno 2007 khairy jamaluddin 061107 02In his opening speech at the Gua Musang Umno division's extraordinary general meeting (EGM), the 71-year-old former finance minister also launched a very thinly-veiled attack against Umno Youth deputy chief Khairy Jamaluddin.

"There are those who graduate from Oxford, Harvard and so forth but are not intelligent, not wise and culturally illiterate. Such people are not qualified to be Umno leaders.

"Why? Because they don't possess enough 'Malay spirit' in their hearts, are not wise and do not excel in speaking or explaining (issues) to the people.

"They are probably qualified to be academic researchers, but not leaders for the Malay-Muslim race," he said.

Khairy is the son-in-law of Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and is said to wield great influence over his father-in-law.

Numerous quarters, including former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, have blamed the 32-year-old Oxford graduate and his associates in the 'fourth floor' of providing wrong advice to Abdullah, culminating in Umno and Barisan Nasional's worst ever election showing on March 8.

Open reflection needed

Bemoaning the crumbling of the Umno and BN fortresses in what he described as a "political disaster", Razaleigh pointed out that the top leadership has yet to initiate any action to discuss why this turn of events took place.

"There has been no effort to invite Umno delegates from all levels to have an open reflection - one that is critical but calm, matured, rational and not emotional..."

Such a move, he said, would help the party find ways to repair itself and prevent a disaster of an even greater magnitude in future.

"We have been hearing all sorts of reaction, views and concerns, criticisms and accusations from individuals in Umno, most of it coming from certain leaders and ministers in Umno. Some are saying that we did not lose, (that) we won. Some also say 'BN will rise again to redeem itself'.

"There are those who blame the Malays for choosing another party and say that they are 'not grateful' (I don't know to whom and for what).

"There are those who blame the young generation for purportedly 'not understanding the

Umno struggle) or for not getting true news, information and stories about the government, Umno and BN via the mainstream media but (choosing instead) to read it in 'anti-government' and 'anti-Umno' blogs."

ku li tengku razaleigh interview 241106 smileRazaleigh said this reflected the old culture of not wanting to examine one's own mistakes but rather shifting the blame to others, such as the voters and the opposition.

"The party leaders, but not all, try to stifle the voices of the grassroots, not wanting to listen to their views and criticism. We go to and fro to spread the propaganda and myth that the grassroots must leave all the problems to the top leaders, otherwise the party will be affected.

"Don't they realise that the biggest weakness in Umno which led to the political disaster is not the grassroots but the top leaders, including the Umno ministers, some of whom do not have a good record, moral or culture.

"These are the people who do not want Umno to change, they are the ones who want the Umno leadership to remain, not be replaced or contested against."

Razaleigh said the problems in Umno do not only concern a few, but all its members.

"Umno is not an exclusive club for the elites and businessmen. Umno is a Malay nationalist party. Its role is not to protect the rice bowl of the top leadership."

The veteran leader also likened Umno to a battered ship which could sink at any moment because of its weak captain, "a captain who often leaves the control of the vessel in the hands of the crew".

According to Razaleigh, Umno is facing an 'emergency' and this must be tackled swiftly before it spreads and destroys whatever that has been built since 1946.

"The people of today are different from those 30 or 40 years ago. Their hopes are different from that of their parents. Their hopes are not similar to the hopes of their parents or grandparents. Umno must continue to remain relevant to the people's ambitions, hopes and demands," he said.

Democracy must return

To rectify the situation, Razaleigh said democracy must return to Umno whereby the 30 percent nomination quota requirement should be abolished.

umno party post polls quota"Every time the party elections come, there are certain people or groups who tell members that the positions of president, deputy president, women's chief and youth chief should not be challenged.

"They have no right to do this. It is the members' right to choose the leaders they want from the grassroots level to the president."

He also said that the party must control the government and not the other way around.

"Umno members who hold party positions cannot be more powerful than the party. The

party is the one which must control, monitor and evaluate their performance."

umno 2007 opening day 081107 flag "If they introduce policies which are against the party's policies, they must be questioned by the Umno supreme council. The logic is simple. The prime minister, deputy prime minister and other ministers from Umno will not be holding these posts if they were not picked by party members.

"Even if the prime minister introduces and implements a policy which could destroy the Malay language or Islam, he must be reprimanded and be disciplined by the party."

On that note, Tengku Razaleigh said the policies and visions of Umno must transcend racial boundaries and the party must not be seen as serving the interests of the Malays alone.

"We want Umno to become a supra-ethnic party, a national party which is fair to all while at the same time keeping in line with its 'traditional vision', which is to defend the motherland from the political, economical, ideological and cultural colonisation of foreign

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