

**Dr M: Ezam a possible Trojan horse**  
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**Andrew Ong**

Former PKR Youth chief Ezam Mohd Noor may possibly act as a Trojan horse for PKR with his recent re-entry into Umno, said former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.  
MCPX

Speaking during a public lecture in Petaling Jaya today, he warned Umno members to be cautious of Ezam's latest move as it may be linked to a bid by Anwar Ibrahim to shore support from Umno to become prime minister.

mahathir ezam umno 310508 "In politics, anything is possible. It may be that (Ezam is a Trojan horse). What I do know is that Anwar is quietly anxious to be supported by Umno.

"He may want to join Umno at some stage, if he (believes that he) can become PM through that (channel)," Mahathir told a press conference after the event, when asked to clarify his comments on Ezam during his speech.

The issue was raised today when a member from the floor asked Mahathir to comment on the Umno leadership's decision to accept Ezam back into the party.

Mahathir, without naming anyone, said that "Those who jumped from one party would jump again" and then had the crowd in stitches by using the 'Frog Prince' folktale as an analogy for 'party hoppers'.

"Maybe the frog would eventually become a prince. We shall wait and see if this happens. Maybe Pak Lah would kiss the frog," he quipped.

### **'Desperate for support'**

On Wednesday, embattled Prime Minister and Umno president Abdullah Ahmad Badawi accepted membership applications from Ezam and several of his followers.

The event received heavy media publicity and is viewed as a morale booster for Abdullah, who has been under attack by party members since Barisan Nasional's poor showing during the March 8 general election.

mahathir satria talk 310508 talk Observers have predicted Umno would task Ezam with attacking his former party and its de facto leader Anwar. But his re-entry into Umno has raised doubts among certain party stalwarts such as Youth chief Hishamuddin Hussien.

In his usual sarcastic tone, Mahathir said the Umno leadership was "desperate" for signs of support and therefore accepted Ezam.

"They are desperate to see support for themselves. Let them accept him. This is a sign of great support for Umno. In fact, they should accept Karpal Singh, the menteri besar of Perak, and also Param Cumaraswamy and Anwar.

"All these people want Abdullah to be there. They are very supportive of Abdullah.

Therefore, they should be accepted, if not a full member, at least an associate member. Karpal in particular. He scolded me for giving a lot of trouble to Abdullah," he said.

### **'Only 35 needed to topple Pak Lah'**

During his 40-minute speech today, at the forum titled "Suntikan Semangat Satria (Injecting the Warrior's Spirit)", Mahathir continued his attacks against Abdullah and urged Umno members to leave the party.

Mahathir said that Abdullah should "be a gentleman" and follow the examples of former Umno president Onn Jaaffar and Tunku Abdul Rahman who both stepped down as party presidents after losing support from the grassroots.

mahathir satria talk 310508 pcDuring the question-and-answer session, Mahathir, now a former Umno member, reiterated his call for Umno MPs to leave the Barisan Nasional coalition and become independent MPs to force Abdullah's government to collapse.

"If 35 MPs leave (Barisan), they become the kingmakers in Parliament - the government might collapse. Anwar is trying to become PM as well. (But) we should leave the choice (of premiership) to Umno.

"When this prime minister (Abdullah) is forced to step down, someone else would take over and the 35 would rejoin Barisan. This is one way to change the party leadership, but at the same time, we ensure that we are still in power," he explained.

### **'They are waiting'**

Following his decision to quit as Umno member in protest of Abdullah's leadership, Mahathir had urged Umno MPs to follow suit and force Abdullah to step down.

mukhriz mahathir umno gopeng 140806 smilesThis has not be altogether successful and even his own son, Mukhriz, the Jerlun MP, did not quit Umno saying that he preferred to reform Umno from within.

Asked by reporters on the matter, a confident Mahathir said there were MPs who had taken in his idea, but had yet to formally quit the party.

"They all say that they have quit the party, but they have not written to the party. They say they will observe for a short while before making a decision," he said.

He also agreed to a suggestion that the Umno MPs' reluctance to quit the party now was because of looming party election.

"They seem to put their hopes in the party election. I don't think the party election would result in any changes in leadership," he added.

However, earlier in his speech, Mahathir had acknowledged that it was not easy to urge Umno MPs to leave the party as they would be worried about losing their perks.

"What if I get government positions? What if I get contracts? All this affects them. No one has is willing to leave (the party), including my own son," he said.

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