

PAS Supporter Defends "Christmas Eve Meeting"
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I refer to the letter by Goh Soon Sin on the 24th December 2010 meeting between the PAS and UMNO leadership.

I would like to categorically state here that it is wrong for non-Malays and non-Muslims to portray any move or effort to politically unite Malays/Muslims as a negative development. It has been my observation that very frequently the prospect of a united Malay/Muslim political front is depicted as a threat to the position of non-Muslims. This is unreasonable and it is a belief that is unfair to Malays/Muslims in general.

First, politics is not necessarily a zero-sum game whereby Muslim unity will automatically mean a setback to non-Muslims. There is no basis for such a view, in my opinion. In fact, many of the myriad problems of the nation can be resolved were the Muslims to unite. Excessive politicking can be avoided so that more time and energy can be devoted towards improving the socio-economic status of the rakyat, regardless of race and religion. The enhanced political stability of the country surely will benefit all, no matter Malay or Chinese or Indian or Kadazan etc.

Second, if non-Muslims truly believe that Muslim political unity is detrimental to them, this can only mean that all strategic and tactical maneuverings of non-Muslim parties have but one overriding objective which is to keep Malays politically split. Do the MCA, DAP, Gerakan, MIC, SUPP and the others want Malays to arrive at that conclusion? If the answer is no, then surely it's in everybody's best interest to refrain from trying to negatively stigmatize any prospect of Muslim unity in this country.

Third, non-Muslim political parties, in the government and the opposition coalitions, very often adopt similar or common stands on issues deemed important by and for the benefit of the non-Muslim community. This they do openly and unabashedly. They consider it reasonable to expect Muslims to accept such commonality among the non-Muslim parties. That being the case, it is only reasonable when PAS and UMNO sit together openly to discuss common issues for the benefit of Muslims, for non-Muslims to accept such meetings with an open mind and not feel threatened by the joint PAS-UMNO action.

Tuan Guru Nik Aziz has confirmed that the said meeting actually had taken place and also unequivocally stated that he is not prepared to reveal the issues discussed. We should respect his stance on the matter.

It is common knowledge by now that Anwar Ibrahim himself has had secret meetings with Najib Tun Razak in the not too distant past, all conducted without the prior knowledge of PAS and DAP. I cannot recall anyone demanding that he disclose the subject of his discussions with Najib.

As a staunch PAS supporter right from the beginning, I have to state herein the anxieties and concern that PAS supporters and members have with Pakatan Rakyat (PR), the turmoil within PKR and the sodomy charges against Anwar.

PAS has had to compromise and drop some of the demands and objectives that the party

traditionally held upon joining PR. DAP however since joining PR has not in the slightest toned down its 'Malaysian's Malaysia' rhetoric and demands on issues such as local government elections which are hardly priorities for PAS. PAS meanwhile cannot even express any support for the idea of an Islamic state or the implementation of Islamic law since becoming part of PR. In short, in Pakatan Rakyat the compromising attitude and sacrifices of PAS have not been reciprocated in like manner by DAP.

I do not wish to elaborate at length on the internal problems of PKR. It is PAS's official stand to respect and not to interfere in the internal affairs of PKR. However, as an ordinary observer, let me just say that the recent elections for party posts conducted by PKR has been known by all and sundry to be full of flaws and shortcomings. Till now, voices of dissatisfaction and unhappiness about the party elections can be heard coming from within PKR itself. To me, the cause of all these is the failure of leadership in PKR.

Currently, in the controversy regarding the appointment of the Selangor state secretary, only the PAS president has come forward to issue an official statement on the matter. In contrast, PKR's de facto leader, president and deputy president, all three of them have remained mute and not issued any official party stance even though the Selangor MB is from their party. The Selangor MB is left alone to fend for himself in dealing with the issue. It is no surprise that he appears to be surrendering. Is the PKR leadership so frightened and cowardly to take a stand that might risk incurring royal displeasure? How can 'Ketuanan Rakyat' be achieved if such is the attitude of the PKR leadership?

The failure of leadership in PKR, to me, has its root causes in the sodomy charges that Dato' Seri Anwar currently faces. It is more than likely that the bulk of his mental and intellectual energy has to be devoted to the ongoing case, so much so that he cannot give the proper input to issues that are besetting the party and PR. He has often been depicted as the one individual who has managed to put together the parties within PR. However, his reputed influence does not appear to have been used to coax DAP into toning down their very vocal demands in issues which are not shared by Muslims. This seems to me to be due to his current sodomy trial.

The anxieties within PAS are that the problems plaguing PKR will adversely impact PAS, its partner in PR. On top of that, PAS supporters often wonder if it is reasonable or fair for a problem-ridden leader of a problem-ridden party to be chosen as the prime minister were PR successful in its bid for government.

These are my honest views that I wish to share with everyone.

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