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Rahman Yakub, Taib patch up

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**BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER,
SAYS FORMER YANG DIPERTUA**

KUCHING: Tun Abdul Rahman Yakub, who turned 80 yesterday, has patched up his differences with his nephew, Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, saying that "blood is thicker than water".

The former Sarawak Yang Dipertua Negeri said his

relationship with Taib was much stronger, now that a minor misunderstanding between them in the past had been sorted out.

Rahman also said he had made the right decision to step down as Sarawak's chief minister in 1981 and name Taib his successor.

In an interview with Bernama,

Rahman, who was also the third Sarawak chief minister from 1970 to 1981 after serving at the federal level as lands and mines deputy minister and later at the Education Ministry, touched on his relationship with Taib then, and now, the friction between them, and Sarawak's future leaders.

Q: How is your relationship with Taib now?

A: Very good, he's my nephew. There was a minor misunderstanding due to the work of someone who died a few years ago, creating a lot of problems between us.

Would it be correct to say that your relationship with Taib is like 'air dicincang tidak akan putus' (blood is thicker than water)?

Yes, *air tetap tidak putus*. To us (uncle and nephew), it is not really a big issue. Somebody reported to him that I was going to topple him. That was not

correct. He (Taib) discovered later that what they told him was completely wrong. He even told my daughter about it.

What do you think of the leaders who may take over from Taib when the time comes?

I had a long chat with Taib during dinner at his house recently. He was scratching his head. Between the two of us, we have administered Sarawak for a total of 35 years. He said he is having difficulty in trying to find someone who could succeed him and be accepted not only by the Malays and Melanau but all the other races as well.

A few months ago, Tun called a press conference. It was regarding some speculation that you were endorsing one of your nephews, Datuk Salleh Jafaruddin, a former deputy education minister, as Taib's successor. It's up to Taib and the party, not only PBB but also the Sarawak

United People's Party (SUPP). There must be a consensus to really, really support someone. So far, Taib told me he has not found anyone. He's not very strong since he had his operation, as you know, cancer of the colon.

How about Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Effendi Norwawi?

He doesn't want to come back. Taib has seen him a few times. He's a good successor if he wants to. He's a very good worker, Effendi Norwawi, so Pak Lah (Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi) has entrusted him to the Economic Planning Unit to implement the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

How would you describe Taib now as a leader?

I don't see anyone measuring up to him. He's a very qualified person. He studied law in Australia and he got his feet on the ground. - Bernama