

Newspaper
Date

New Straits Times
10 March 2016

No hasty actions for Umno

LET PEOPLE DECIDE:
Information chief
says party will
focus on people's
welfare

LAILI ISMAIL
PETALING JAYA
news@nst.com.my

UMNO will not act in haste against party leaders and members who had conspired with the opposition to topple Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, its information chief Tan Sri Annuar Musa said.

He said Umno had yet to discuss the fate of those involved in the alliance forged by former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang.

"We have not discussed it. Umno is a big party with experienced politicians. We will not act in a hurry and we will let the people themselves evaluate what the declaration is all about.

"In the world of new media, people's perception can easily be influenced by (things they read on) the Internet," he said on TV3's *Soal Jawab*, hosted by Nasharudin Tajudin, which aired last night.

"Despite the issues raised out there (taking down the current government), the party has to focus on tackling issues on the ground. Have we done enough in looking after the people's welfare?

"We have to listen to them as they are concerned about the economy and cost of living. The mandate given by the people should not



Umno information chief Tan Sri Annuar Musa on TV3's 'Soal Jawab' yesterday. Pic by Asyraf Hamzah

be neglected."

Annuar said there was no way Najib could be removed from power despite attempts to do so, including the Mahathir-Lim Kit Siang Declaration.

"Those who understand the (Federal) Constitution and are not driven by emotions know that Najib cannot be ousted with the methods being used now. Whatever they are doing to take Najib down now are part of a gimmick. They still have to wait until the next general election."

Umno, he said, had two more years to solve the problems at hand and work hard for the people.

"The opposition can only bring up issues instead of solutions. We (Umno) have to prioritise the people. God-willing, we can overcome this challenge by closing ranks and going to the ground."

When asked about former deputy prime minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's involvement in the Declaration, he said Muhyiddin was being used by Dr Mahathir to oust Najib.

"Although they (Dr Mahathir and Muhyiddin) did not share the same grouses in terms of Najib's leadership, Muhyiddin fell in with Dr Mahathir's movement.

"At one point, Dr Mahathir was confident that Muhyiddin would help him to take down Najib, but he overestimated him and he lacked support from Umno's grassroots."

Annuar said Muhyiddin should have consulted Umno supreme council members to discuss issues he was concerned about instead of giving the controversial speech at the Cheras Umno meeting in July last year.

"He had neither officially nor unofficially discussed his concerns with us. In fact, he missed two supreme council meetings prior to his suspension," he said, adding that Muhyiddin had only begun to voice his concerns publicly after he was sacked as deputy prime minister.

Najib, he said, had no choice but to remove Muhyiddin from power to safeguard the party's values as

supporting the opposition was "an unacceptable sin to the party".

Annuar said, however, that Umno leaders should not take the Declaration lightly and to consider the movement as a test for the party.

"I cannot say that the alliance (between Lim and Dr Mahathir) has not made Umno stronger, but we cannot be in denial. Dr Mahathir is a force to be reckoned with as he is able to create cracks in the party and galvanise non-political movements to rally to his cause."

The movement, Annuar said, could also be "divine intervention" for Umno to see through Dr Mahathir's true intentions.

"He had long been accepted as a great political icon but this declaration could be for Umno to see that the movement did not come from the rakyat and was vindictive in nature.

"Hopefully, when they see that the party's survival is threatened by Dr Mahathir's actions, they will close ranks and set aside negative sentiments," he said.

Dr Mahathir had, on March 4, led a group to oust Najib as prime minister, which was attended by Muhyiddin and leaders from the opposition and civil society organisations.

Others present at the event were former Kedah menteri besar Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir, Lim Kit Siang, PKR deputy president Datuk Seri Azmin Ali and former MCA president Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik.

As a veteran politician, Annuar said he had witnessed the many tactics used by Dr Mahathir to remove politicians from power.

"People can be easily engulfed in all the 'drama' that is happening right now, but they fail to realise that Dr Mahathir is highly skilled

and cunning in using people to achieve his goals.

"He always had deceptive manoeuvre to take down those in power. He did this with Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Tun Musa Hitam and the late Tun Ghafar Baba.

"With the declaration, he is using the Machiavellian approach to topple Najib as he could not rally support from Umno members and was disappointed when his son, Mukhriz, was not defended in his home state."

Annuar said Dr Mahathir could not separate himself from the political world after being in power for so long.

"He had once jokingly said to me that power was the greatest aphrodisiac. This has become a problem for him as he finds it difficult to detach himself from politics.

"He controlled three elements when he had the political regime in his grip — machinery, money and media," Annuar said.

He said machinery referred to Umno as the country's biggest political party, money referred to rich and influential figures behind Dr Mahathir's movement whom he had exchanged favours with and media referred to how he had used print and electronic media to maintain his power and take down those he was against.

"When he was no longer the prime minister, these three elements were no longer under his control.

"When Najib could not fulfil his requests, he thought it was necessary to change the leadership," he said, adding Dr Mahathir had a superiority complex, which drove him to think that he could still control leaders in the current government.

NST- 10/3/2016