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Tun M – new bestie to opposition

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is so obsessed with toppling Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak that he is prepared to join forces with the opposition.

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TUN Dr Mahathir Mohamad's resignation from Umno did not have the shock and awe of the first time he quit Umno.

It made news but his repeat performance was not exactly like *Star Wars* where every sequel has been a blockbuster.

People in Umno were not surprised because he had been the enemy from within for more than a year.

His own parting words to Umno were that it was no longer the party he knew and that Umno had become "Najib's party".

He had been in communication with key DAP and PKR leaders the last few months and they obviously knew of his impending resignation because several of them had issued run-up statements calling on him to work with them.

Malaysia's most fascinating politician is about to enter new territory in his obsession to topple Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

This time around, Dr Mahathir is joining forces with the opposition parties.

He is so consumed with overthrowing Najib that he is prepared to work with parties and personalities whom he had previously denounced.

Dr Mahathir has brought new

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analysis



meaning to the saying that there are no permanent friends or foes in politics.

"It looks like he has come around to supporting a regime change," said lawyer and former think-tank chief Khaw Veon Szu.

Umno leaders have tried to downplay his exit as something that will have limited impact on their party.

As some of them pointed out, he was doing a better job than the opposition even when he was inside.

They took care not to use harsh words to send him off but deep inside, many of them are worried that he will take the warfare to a new level.

According to Khaw, the elder politician has become the unofficial leader of the opposition or, as some joke, the *ketua umum* of the opposition alliance.

"He could be the trigger figure and that could be the gamechanger in the macro political scenario," said Khaw.

The next election is going to be about the Malay votes and Dr Mahathir's alliance with the opposition is bound to have impact on the Malay electorate.

The big question now is whether his son Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir and suspended Umno deputy president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin will follow him out of Umno.

The spotlight will be on Mukhriz and Muhyiddin and their next move and how they can help the opposition realise their ambitions of federal power.

The grapevine in PKR has it that Muhyiddin will be projected as the opposition's prime minister candidate. He will fill the lacuna left by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

PKR deputy president Datuk Seri Azmin Ali, it is said, will be a suitable deputy prime minister candidate.

None of those in the opposition could quite commit to a role for Mukhriz as yet which means he will probably have to fight for it.

However, the PKR side is expecting Muhyiddin to bring along a few MPs. PKR politicians say Muhyiddin has to deliver the numbers and they hope he will not sit around or go on golfing holidays while others do the work.

Dr Mahathir had told several peo-

ple he was disappointed that Muhyiddin had not gone around the country to garner support after losing his Cabinet job. He complained that Muhyiddin had instead taken one holiday after another.

The former premier is believed to have been communicating with a leading opposition figure from around the time that Muhyiddin was dropped from the Cabinet.

The presence of Dr Mahathir and Muhyiddin at the wedding of Azmin's daughter in December was a hint of the warming ties.

Dr Mahathir is also believed to have SOS-ed a top PKR leader for help at the height of the Kedah *mentri besar* issue.

He asked the PKR leader if he could get the opposition assemblymen in Kedah to support Mukhriz so that he could continue as the *mentri besar*.

Bizarre as it may sound, Dr Mahathir was plotting a scenario where Mukhriz, who had only three Barisan Nasional assemblymen with him, would survive with the support of the opposition – four from PKR, two from DAP, eight from PAS and one from Amanah.

It was less about the survival of his son than the fact that he was prepared to do anything or cooperate with anyone to do Najib in.

It was a good thing the plan fell through or else Mukhriz would have made history for all the wrong reasons.

Dr Mahathir is quite incredible – 90 years and still unable to let go. Some see him as a white knight and a hero, others think he is a vindictive old man.

As for the opposition, he is the best thing to have happened for them since the Pakatan Rakyat coalition went bust.

They see him as their saviour, never mind that they have condemned and blamed Umno for everything that has gone wrong under the sun.

But there is also something very sad about what he is doing, especially for those who have followed his long career.

Like Najib, Dr Mahathir is also struggling with a credibility problem. He is guilty of almost everything that he has accused Najib of. Hence, the lukewarm public interest in his second resignation.

But his image will probably undergo a makeover thanks to his new besties in the opposition. They will now proceed to paint him whiter than white so that he can help them revive their dream of Putrajaya.