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# Anwar: Dr M is the right choice

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## Pakatan de facto leader defends former arch nemesis against detractors

**PETALING JAYA:** Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has defended his former arch nemesis Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad against detractors who have questioned the former premier's prominent involvement in the Opposition pact.

The jailed Pakatan Harapan de facto leader said he understood and accepted the scepticism that many "loyal and caring friends" have towards Dr Mahathir, who is now Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia and Pakatan chairman.

However, he offered assurances that the Opposition would not be veered off course by the former

prime minister as the coalition's brand of politics does not limit power to the elite few.

"Fears that have been voiced about the possibility of a party chairman veering from the objective that has been agreed upon is not possible under the existing (leadership) structure.

"The common policies that were agreed upon have been revealed to the public in a transparent manner," Anwar said in a statement yesterday.

He was responding to dissenting voices from Opposition-aligned groups such as Suara Rakyat

Malaysia (Suaram), Otai Reformis, Parti Sosialis Malaysia and several non-governmental organisations (NGO) which had disputed the Pakatan leadership's recent decision to appoint Dr Mahathir as the coalition's chairman.

Anwar said that Dr Mahathir's presence, as well as Pribumi's, was part of a plan to increase the network of support for a struggle that is more widely agreed upon.

"Personally, I welcome Dr Mahathir's readiness to join us in this struggle.

"The personal pain and injuries are small compared to the people's

interests and the future of this country.

"Dr Mahathir is today forced to operate in a different setting that is more tense, and he has acted quickly and bravely. He should be given the space to help expand the people's movement," he said.

At the same time, Anwar welcomed NGOs and activists to continue evaluating Pakatan's performance and to offer suggestions for improvement.

"I continue to have confidence in their role to spearhead changes heading into the 14th general election," he added.