

**Najib's Speech Focuses On Need For Umno's Resurgence: Analysts
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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 1 (Bernama) -- Umno president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's policy speech today was seen as capable of injecting a fighting spirit among party members after the poor performance of Umno and the Barisan Nasional (BN) in the 2008 general election, said several analysts.

Political analyst, Dr Sivamurugan Pandian said the Prime Minister was smart in taking the opportunity at the general assembly this time to create the mood among the delegates to have greater love for the party.

"I notice that the five main thrusts outlined by Najib at the assembly this time were appropriate as a reminder to the delegates on the eroded values that had been the source of strength for Umno all this while.

"These eroded values had caused the failure of Umno and the Barisan Nasional (BN) to get a two-thirds majority in Parliament in the 2008 general election," he said when contacted by Bernama, here Thursday.

The five main strengths outlined by Najib in his opening speech today were the ability of the party to think of a new idea to take advantage of the new environment, the adoption of the principles of moderation in all fields, whether in terms of governance, power sharing, the economy, race relations and international relations.

Three other main strengths were that Umno always placed value on the idea and information market; placing the welfare of the people above everything else and the ability of Umno to fulfill its pledges.

The associate professor of the Social Science Study Centre, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) said Najib's reminder to the delegates was also clear and it showed that the Prime Minister could smell the fact that having a large membership was no guarantee for the party to continue to achieve victory.

He said the emphasis by Najib that he did not want Umno members to merely be members but 'Umno people' who were loyal to the party and would never betray the party, was apt and suited the new political landscape.

"Being a member does not mean that he will defend and vote for the party. But being Umno people will certainly mean that all of his struggles, efforts and loyalty will be for the party and will ensure that the party wins.

"The struggle for party survival actually depends on the 'people'. There are parties that don't have a large membership but they can still win," he said.

Former vice-chancellor of Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Tan Sri Dr Ibrahim Abu Shah was of the view that the policy speech of the Umno president, who is also the BN chairman, was not merely to remind the Umno members, but also the whole community in the country that Umno was championing the cause of all communities all this while.

He said the people's evaluation on the party's performance should not only be made based

on the last two or three years but since the country's early independence days.

"Whatever policies that were introduced all this while, whether concerning education, the economy and so on, had actually benefited everyone. This policy was not only for the Malays, but also for the non-Malays.

Another political analyst, Professor Madya Shaharuddin Badaruddin said Najib, in his speech, reminded the delegates to be aggressive always in going against the current which was becoming more challenging.

The lecturer with the Faculty of Administration Science and Policy Studies, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Shah Alam, Selangor said as such, party members needed a new approach to ensure that Umno continued to be relevant in the new political landscape.

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