

**'Repented' Mat Taib now tells Malays to back DAP**  
**Malaysian Insider**  
**April 25, 2013**  
**By Syed Jaymal Zahiid**

PAYA JARAS, April 25 — Once a major strategist for Barisan Nasional (BN) in the last polls, Tan Sri Muhammad Taib is now praising the DAP as a party that is ready to lead Malaysia with a crop of young leaders he feels is capable of protecting public interests.

The former Umno Selangor menteri besar said the Malays must not be swayed by propaganda portraying the DAP as a threat to the community's position as the country's dominant race, arguing that they could instead benefit from the pro-people policies promoted by the DAP-PKR-PAS alliance if it was voted into power.

"If you give leaders like Tony Pua, Rafizi Ramli... these young leaders, I'll tell you the government agencies will be safe in their hands," he told about a 500-strong Malay crowd at a ceramah held deep in the Paya Jaras Hilir village here last night.

Pua is the DAP's national publicity chief and is seen as one of the party's brightest prospects while Rafizi, known as the "expose man", is the PKR equivalent.

Muhammad, or popularly known as "Mat Taib" or "Mat Tyson", said the two emerging young leaders, along with a list of other high-calibre figures like PAS vice-president Datuk Husam Musa and deputy president Mohamad Sabu, could help push Malaysia to greater heights.

He said the quality of Pakatan Rakyat's (PR) leadership was proven with many success stories in states under its control like Selangor's increased cash reserve of RM2.6 billion, a distant cry from the less than RM500 million saved under BN's control, and Penang's ability to rake in high investments.

"These are Class A leaders... I am telling you PAS-DAP-PKR are ready to take over as the new government," he said.

But despite PR's able leadership, the former Umno vice-president, who defected to PAS on Monday, noted that the Malays at large were still afraid of backing the opposition pact due to the fear of a possible "Chinese takeover" of the country if the DAP was to be voted into power.

Muhammad said Umno, through its control of the mainstream media, has planted the false idea among the Malays to consolidate its power base through fear.

"They are trying to spin, to make it appear like if you vote for Pakatan Rakyat, you are putting the DAP in power. This is not true," he said.

He noted that his PR ally was contesting fewer than 50 of the 222 parliamentary seats at the May 5 polls, making it impossible for the party to form the majority and lead the government.

"They are trying to scare the Malays by saying the DAP is trying to control the government.

"It's like trying to scare your children by crying out 'ghost'. There is no ghost. We just want to scare our children. The Malays shouldn't be scared," he said.

Since his defection to PAS, Muhammad has helped the opposition campaign throughout his home state of Selangor, especially targeting the rural areas where most of its predominantly Malay population is known to be staunch Umno supporters.

A few Umno leaders recently told The Malaysian Insider that Muhammad's popularity within the community could help PR make inroads and loosen Umno's grip on the state's Malay heartland.

Muhammad was Selangor's menteri besar from 1986 to 1997. He made his first public appearance on Monday after losing his Cabinet post in a 2009 reshuffle by Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

Observers believe the Islamist party's pull of Muhammad and several establishment figures will help hone its evolving image as a progressive party bidding for federal power in multi-racial Malaysia at the May 5 polls.

Hakcipta © 2013 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/repented-mat-taib-now-tells-malays-to-back-dap/>