

**Dr M, Daim will decide debate on Najib's future, says veteran newsman**  
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**By Ida Lim**

KUALA LUMPUR, May 30 — Any open debate on Datuk Seri Najib Razak's future as Umno president and prime minister will be driven by the country's longest-serving Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Tun Daim Zainuddin, veteran journalist Datuk Abdul Kadir Jasin said today.

Following the May 5 polls where Najib led his Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition to victory, observers have said that he is now seeking to secure his position as the party leader in the Umno elections that are expected to take place this year.

"Dr Mahathir, Daim and several independent bloggers will determine whether Mohd Najib's future as Umno President and Prime Minister will be openly debated," Abdul Kadir wrote in a blog post titled "Kesan Positif Sekatan dan Imbangan Selepas PRU13" (The positive effects of checks and balance after GE13), referring to former Umno minister Daim.

Abdul Kadir said that the two veteran Umno leaders had even met and drawn up an action plan following the 13th general election where BN managed to hold on to power with a smaller haul of 133 federal seats, fewer than its 140-seat win in 2008.

"Daim met Dr Mahathir in Putrajaya few days after the May 5 general election where they were said to have made a 'review' of the results and the short-term and medium-term measures that they will take," Abdul Kadir said.

Abdul Kadir also said that BN's war room should acknowledge that it had lost out to Najib's predecessor Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his advisers, referring to the former BN chief who had retained power in 2008 despite his coalition losing its customary two-thirds parliamentary majority for the first time in history.

"Whatever it is, Abdullah can now hold his head up high because the accusation that his performance in PRU 2008 was hambar is no longer accurate because Mohd Najib's achievement was even worse despite support by Dr Mahathir and Daim. Looking at Mohd Najib's achievement, I myself feel that (I had) over-criticised Abdullah after GE 2008.

"Like it or not, Mohd Najib and his staff that run the 'Bilik Perang' (War Room) BN should sincerely, openly and transparently admit that their boasts had memakan diri (failed) and they lost to Abdullah and his Fourth Floor Boys."

The Malaysian Insider previously reported that sources within BN had questioned the strategies used by the BN war room, but BN secretary-general Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor reportedly denied on May 15 that the war room had failed to achieve its targets, pointing out that BN had won the mandate to form the federal government.

On Monday, Abdul Kadir's blog carried a transcript of Daim's interview with local daily China Press, where the former finance minister blamed Najib's advisers for BN's failure to regain a two-thirds parliamentary majority, claiming that they had used the wrong strategy to drive BN's election campaign.

In the same blog post today, Abdul Kadir noted that Najib still has backing from the

influential Dr Mahathir and may experience less opposition from those trying to take him down.

"In the political arena, Mohd Najib Abdul Razak's position will continue to be disputed. Just maybe not as outspoken as what happened to Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi after PRU 2008 because Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is lebih mesra (more friendly) with Mohd Najib and many of the bloggers that used to be anti-Abdullah are now pro-Mohd Najib. They may not support any negative moves towards Mohd Najib, and may even demonise anyone that tries to bring down Mohd Najib."

He said many harsh comments have been directed at Daim since his interview criticising Najib and his men was published.

Dr Mahathir has said BN has no choice but to throw its weight behind Najib, who will likely survive his second term as prime minister due to a lack of an alternative, international business newswire Bloomberg reported on May 25.

"I think the party will support him because of a lack of an alternative," 87-year-old Dr Mahathir was quoted as saying in Tokyo in a speech at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan.

Observers have said BN's performance will likely affect 59-year-old Najib's bid to stay on as Umno president, with Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, 66, seen as a possible contender for the post.

Despite the BN's poorer overall electoral results, Najib's leadership had ensured Umno succeeded in netting a significant nine more seats in Election 2013, giving the Malay party a total of 88 in the Dewan Rakyat compared to 79 in Election 2008.

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