

Shia: An effort to break up friendships in PAS

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In the past few years, PAS Information chief Datuk Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man (pic) has issued statements each time the Islamist party and Mohamad Sabu were repeatedly attacked on a host of issues including the deputy president's purported Shia leanings.

When Mohamad issued a statement said to glorify Malay leftist Mat Indera as a hero for attacking the Bukit Kepong police station, Tuan Ibrahim was the first party leader who defended the popular politician through a lengthy statement.

Tuan Ibrahim's statement was posted on Facebook and this saw a whole range of comments from many netizens including some who stated why they saw him as pro-Shiite.

Perhaps one of the reasons was Mohamad himself giving the impression by being too "pro-Iran" on his Facebook resulting in many doubting his commitment to the Sunni branch of Islam followed by most Muslims in the country. Some cited the Muslim heroes that he often spoke as role models during his ceramahs that had raised doubts about his leanings.

A Facebook commentator wrote: "Many see anyone being pro-Iran as being pro-Shiite. But that is a flawed assumption towards you. You are famous for your vociferous criticisms of the Zionist, America's conspiracy with its puppet regimes. Any Muslim country that fights Zionism and America is supported by you.

"Incidentally, the Muslim countries that are leading the charge are Iran and Lebanon, through the Hezbollah. By the same token any sites which promote their fight against the Zionists would be accused of being pro-Shiite or pro-Iran. Sadly none of the Sunni leaderships in Muslim countries are leading the fight against Zionism.

"Those who see the international fight in terms of Sunni and Shia are people who obviously have no idea about the intrigues of Islam at the international level," the commentator said.

These views appear to be consistent with a statement by PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang on June 18 which called on Muslims to go back to the root of the Sunni-Shia problem.

He noted the problems associated with the four branches in Islam are a product of a shallow understanding of the faith.

But Mohamad is seen in PAS as a big contributor to the Islamist party's struggle and, as its deputy, many believe he complements the effort to become a mass-based party in Malaysia.

He has succeeded in doing what Abdul Hadi is unable to accomplish as the PAS president. In short, Mohamad is the vital ingredient needed by the party in its struggle to be accepted by not just Muslims but non-Muslims in the country and PAS as replacement for Umno.

With such potential, why should it not surprise anyone if some in PAS have combined forces with some in Umno to "kill off" Mohamad now, say party insiders.

But they hope Mohamad will do some introspection and consider the views about him being

pro-Shiite.

There is no harm in him listening to the views as life in politics is about managing perception, the insiders told The Malaysian Insider.

His failure to manage this perception is bound to open doors to his enemies in the party, according to them.

If they succeed it will be only because Mohamad allowed them the space to do so, the party insiders said. - July 30, 2013

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