

**Unity government an unsanctioned push by eager aide, friendly businessman, say PMO sources**  
**Malaysian Insider**  
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Putrajaya's recent peace overtures to Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for a possible unity government was initiated by an eager political aide and a top Indonesian businessman without the direct knowledge of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, say sources from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

They told The Malaysian Insider that the overtures were not sanctioned by the top leadership although Anwar has confirmed to the Asia Sentinel news portal that ex-Indonesian vice-president Jusuf Kalla (pic) has been acting as an intermediary.

"It was initiated by an eager political aide and a famous Indonesian businessman. They were concerned about Malaysia's future direction," a source told The Malaysian Insider in Kuala Lumpur.

Another government source confirmed the overtures while Pakatan Rakyat (PR) sources said knowledge of the talks was limited to a tight circle around the PKR de facto leader.

But opposition politicians laughed off talk that the proposal made to Anwar was unsanctioned, noting that no aide would dare to move without getting the go-ahead from the boss. They also point out the flurry of trips by Kalla related to the talks.

Talk of a unity government has set off roiling speculation and created some unease among Umno politicians close to Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who has made it clear that Anwar must not have a role in any BN government.

The peace moves come ahead of key polls in both Najib's Umno and Anwar's PKR although analysts say both leaders are not likely to be challenged for top posts.

The Malaysian Insider had reported a possible meeting between Najib and Anwar in Jakarta in June but it was denied by both parties although they were in the Indonesian capital city that same weekend.

But Anwar recently admitted there were peace overtures from Najib after Election 2013 which Najib's BN won with a lesser haul of 133 federal seats, seven less than in 2008.

Anwar's PR also won 51% of the popular vote but failed to take over Putrajaya, which led to talk of a possible unity government a month after the May 5 general election.

In an interview with the Asia Sentinel, Anwar said the peace moves were initiated by Najib, but he had sent word through intermediaries that attacks by Utusan Malaysia on the Chinese and Indian communities would have to cease before any progress could be made.

He also wanted as a condition the lowering of the racial temperature in Malaysia.

"I said the fundamental issues must be addressed, ending the racial stuff, there has to be a clear understanding and commitment to reform and change, " Anwar had told the Asia Sentinel.

Anwar has not received any reply from Najib despite the overtures through Kalla, the latest of which was made several weeks ago.

Earlier in the year, Kalla was unsuccessful in trying to broker a commitment from Najib and Anwar to accept the outcome of GE13, regardless of the coalition which won.

It is unclear why Najib would send feelers for a unity government given the antipathy in Umno towards Anwar and his partners in Pakatan Rakyat.

Within Umno there is a sense that while BN is weak, the ruling party is in a strong position, having won 88 of the 133 parliamentary seats on offer at GE13. In this current mood, party leaders would view offering any olive branch to the opposition as a weakness.

The Asia Sentinel offered this interpretation on the unity government move: "Presumably the Najib gambit opens another front against Mahathir, who has been allowing surrogate bloggers to attack the wounded prime minister ever since the election." - August 14, 2013.

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