

Ties with PKR a festering wound in PAS
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NEWS ANALYSIS BY THE MALAYSIAN INSIDER

Calls to review ties with PKR is not new in PAS but the call by influential ulama wing chief Datuk Harun Taib (pic) yesterday has revealed the depth of the festering issue within the Islamist party.

PKR's multiracial and secular approach to politics has always been a simmering issue with the conservative Islamic scholars in PAS but support from Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat and late party president Datuk Fadzil Noor for Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim always ensured it was kept under wraps, even before the May 5 general election.

But Harun's proposal at the Ulama Multaqa SeMalaysia in Alor Star yesterday revealed that it has always been the focus of the factional fighting within PAS.

For a long time, a group of Islamic scholars in PAS have criticised some of the party leaders for their close ties with Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leaders, especially those from PKR.

Monikers such as Anwarinas, parasites and viruses were liberally thrown at such leaders by the disgruntled scholars such as Datuk Hassan Ali, who shortly after he had been fired from PAS, declared them as parasites within the party.

Former deputy president Nasharudin Mat Isa, prior to being ejected from the PAS Syura Council, repeatedly urged the party to study its position within PR.

The Umno-controlled Berita Harian newspaper had quoted Nasharudin urging PAS to exit from PR with the excuse PKR and DAP had broken the conditions of their political consensus.

A clipping of a story published in Berita Harian recently on Nasharudin's call for PAS to leave the opposition coalition. - September 15, 2013. A clipping of a story published in Berita Harian recently on Nasharudin's call for PAS to leave the opposition coalition. - September 15, 2013. Now it is clear that what Nasharudin has been preaching for a long time is being done officially by the ulama wing chief Harun.

On Friday, central executive council member Khalid Samad described such ideas as coming from the party's enemies, such as Umno.

But this is no longer the case as the signs clearly indicate a difference of opinion within PAS without even Umno meddling in its 1951 offshoot. Party insiders say this is because both sides have a large number of supporters.

Now that it is out in the open, they say it is certain that the 59th PAS Muktamar to be held from November 22 to 24 in Shah Alam will be the main battleground for the two sides of the issue.

If it is not handled in a delicate manner, the events which occurred in Turkey will repeat itself within PAS, say party insiders.

In Turkey, an Islamic party split into two groups when a dissenting group led by Recip Tayyip Erdogan formed AKP and left the supporters of Necmetin Erbakan in Saadet. Erdogan

is now the Turkish prime minister.

A similar scenario here would be the progressive PAS leaders known as the Erdogan group wanting to continue with PR and Harun's group wanting to reevaluate the party's position.

Will the Erdogan group split from PAS after the muktamar?

Party insiders say "God forbid" but say if it was for the best, then one of the differing sides should leave the party, just as they did with Umno in 1951. - September 15, 2013.

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