

**Umno's overtures to PAS a ploy to break Pakatan, warns Zaid  
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A former Umno minister has warned PAS to be wary of Umno's overtures for renewed unity talks, as it was aimed at splitting the Pakatan Rakyat coalition, of which PAS is one of the three members.

Datuk Zaid Ibrahim (pic) said the suggestion by Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin for both the Malay parties to work together in the interest of the Muslim community was to appeal to a certain group of PAS leaders who still harbour hopes of setting up a unity government with Umno.

Moreover, the opposition Islamic party will be having its internal polls this year.

"Muhyiddin is taking advantage of this to heat up the issue, to cause internal chaos.

"PAS should not be taken in by this. They have to remain in Pakatan Rakyat," he said in an interview with The Malaysian Insider.

He called on PAS to think of the future, which includes working towards a two-party system.

Muhyiddin had suggested that both PAS and Umno work together, saying that the partnership was necessary to address bigger issues facing the Muslim community.

The Umno deputy president said Muslim unity would require political stability, and this included addressing issues with the Islamic opposition party.

Despite PAS spiritual leader Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat rejecting any attempts to work together with Umno, Muhyiddin said there have been calls by Muslim political leaders for more cooperation between both parties.

"As far as Umno is concerned, we have no problems with that. We want to see if we can work together," he told a question-and-answer session with students at the International Islamic University in Gombak yesterday.

Talks of collaboration to foster Muslim unity have been refuted by PAS loyalists since 2008 who accused Umno of using such talks to mask its unity government plan.

Nik Aziz, in slamming the door on unity talks with Umno, had said: "I would not allow it, for as long as I am alive, I will not permit any effort of collaboration between PAS and Umno."

Zaid, 63, was in Umno for 23 years and the de facto law minister during Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's tenure but quit his Cabinet post and Umno in September 2008 over the arrests of three individuals - DAP'S Teresa Kok, blogger Raja Petra Kamaruddin and journalist Tan Hoon Cheng under the Internal Security Act, which allowed for detention without trial.

He had earlier quit his Cabinet post in September the same year.

He joined PKR, also one of the parties in Pakatan Rakyat, in June 2009 but resigned a year later citing loss of confidence in the party's leadership.

He later took over a Kelantan-based party and called it People's Welfare Party (KITA) but quit in November last year. - September 19, 2013.

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