

Taib Thought Potential Successors Would Fight One Another - Abang Johari

Bernama

13 Feb, 2014

KUCHING, Feb 13 (Bernama) -- The Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) closed-door meeting last weekend which eventually led to outgoing Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud choosing Tan Sri Adenan Satem as his successor, was not short of a dramatic moment.

PBB deputy president Datuk Amar Abang Johari Tun Openg said Abdul Taib was stunned when he (Abang Johari), together with Adenan and senior vice-president Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hasan, disagreed with Abdul Taib to let the party supreme council and caucus choose his successor.

"Actually, he (Abdul Taib) was quite surprised. He thought that we wanted to fight (with one another). I just want to be sincere here. The three of us agreed to give the mandate to him to decide.

"(Although) he (Abdul Taib) said the party had to decide, we told him that we give you (Abdul Taib) the mandate to decide," Abang Johari said at a press conference here Thursday.

Abang Johari, along with Awang Tengah were listed along with Adenan as the possible new chief minister before Abdul Taib finally announced yesterday, that Adenan would be his successor once he stepped down on Feb 28.

"Later, we (Abang Johari, Adenan and Awang Tengah) went to stop the (supreme council and caucus) meeting and Adenan proposed to the meeting to give the mandate to the chief minister to name his successor, and I seconded it. That is the team spirit that we have in PBB," he said.

Abang Johari, who is also housing and tourism state minister, said Adenan should be given ample time and space to prove his ability as the new chief minister.

"During the transitional period, we must give ample time and space for the new chief minister to get the bolts and nuts of the administration, and then for him to move forward to continue with the policies (laid down by Abdul Taib)," he added.

He said it was not only his wish but that of all Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders in Sarawak to see that the state leadership transition between Abdul Taib and Adenan would take place smoothly, unlike the problem which occurred when Abdul Taib took the helm from then-chief minister Tun Abdul Rahman Yaakub in 1981.

"Now, we do not want any problem to occur between (Abdul) Taib and the new chief minister. When (Abdul) Taib told me that Adenan would be the new chief minister, I gave my full support because he (Adenan) needs all our support," added Abang Johari.

He also brushed aside speculation that Adenan would only be "interim chief minister", pending the PBB's next triennial general assembly.

"A chief minister is a chief minister. He (Adenan) is the chief minister. We give priority to the interest of the party," said Abang Johari. He did not rule out certain changes to occur, following the state leadership transition but such changes would take place through the understanding of all concerned.

"When there is a transition, there must be an adjustment. In our case, definitely there will be adjustments. Otherwise, it will be static. Certain things have to change," he noted.

Abang Johari also dismissed the possibility of Abdul Taib's interference in the state administration once Adenan took over as chief minister.

"Whenever a leader left a legacy behind, he will have to understand it. But in this case, he (Abdul Taib) understands it and had even hoped that the successor will be better than him," he said.

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