

IS ZAHID THIRSTY FOR EVEN MORE POWER?

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By Admin-s

He has risen up the ranks of senior leadership at an accelerated rate, and success has a way of making a man want more.

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Uncertainty reigns supreme in Umno. Many fear that as Prime Minister Najib Razak moves to quell dissent within Umno, he won't spare Muhyiddin Yassin. The rumours have grown louder with the circulation through WhatsApp of a list of dissenters who will be sacked from Umno along with Muhyiddin.

Among the names mentioned is Mukhriz Mahathir, Menteri Besar of Kedah and, more significantly, son of Najib's chief critic, former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad.

Since the emergence of the list, Umno has been in full damage control mode, with some denying any knowledge of such a move and others steadfastly refusing to discuss Supreme Council matters with outsiders. Some blogging pundits are also claiming that Muhyiddin will not be dismissed, but will have his duties as Deputy President suspended, thus devaluing his position, but possibly circumventing a predicted civil war.

Indeed, such a move may cross the boundaries of what the Umno grassroots are able to accept from the party leadership, especially given the current unease that permeates the party. Najib used to avoid rearranging Umno politics too much, given the intricate web of allegiances and alliances in the party of three million members, but he decided to play a card in removing Anina Saaduddin, who filed a suit against him over the notorious RM2.6 billion deposit in his personal bank accounts.

Anina is a woman who exemplifies the spirit of the old Umno – principled, outspoken, defiant and brave. And now she's a martyr to many. Muhyiddin would be remiss not to champion someone who has shown the same devotion and loyalty to the party that he has. She is his best example of what happens when the decisions of the leadership frustrate the grassroots – they take matters into their own hands.

There is one figure who stands to gain the most from the internal shifts that may occur in Umno, and that is Umno vice-president and newly minted Deputy Prime Minister Zahid Hamidi. The often belligerent and rambunctious politician is popular among the party's sizeable conservative camp, given his hardline stance on Malay rights.

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