

## **The Divisive Factor**

**MALAYSIA TODAY**

**September 9, 2017**

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PKR seems to have lost its direction before the election war is even started.

For these two weeks, PKR is like a rocking boat that has no idea which way it is headed to: the commander, second-in-command and the sailors all appearing at a total loss.

Some insist to continue negotiating with PAS for a tie-up in election while others want a complete cleavage from the Islamist party in line with Pakatan Harapan's stand.

Vice president Rafizi Ramli once again finds himself in the limelight. The party's anti-PAS spokesperson has unveiled the full lists of the party's pro- and anti-PAS leaders, accentuating the confrontational mode between the two opposing factions in so doing.

On the other side of him is deputy president and Selangor MB Azmin Ali.

Azmin has never abandoned the chances of seeking cooperation with PAS for the simple reason he wants to consolidate PKR's hold of Selangor.

If PAS goes all out in the election war in three-cornered fights with BN and Pakatan, some of Pakatan's seats, in particular those now held by PKR and PAS, could fall into BN's hands, signalling a possible end to the PKR-led Selangor government.

If he can convince PAS to at least work with PKR in the state in a bid to avert three-cornered fights, there are good chances his party will retain its political fortress, and he can still be MB.

Rafizi obviously doesn't think the same way. His think tank "Invoke" claims that three-cornered fights will work in favor of PH and the party therefore needs not forge any relationship with PAS at all.

The rivalry between these two factions is not just a matter of political stand but also the chronic confrontation between the two gentlemen.

The “Kajang Move” meant to oust Khalid Ibrahim was said to have been orchestrated by Rafizi single-handedly, not only to remove Khalid but also to sideline Azmin Ali. Unfortunately the “Kajang Move” did not work and neither Anwar Ibrahim nor Kak Wan made it to the MB throne, burying instead the seed of Pakatan Rakyat’s collapse later.

The fall of “Kajang Move” nevertheless put Azmin on the MB seat out of Rafizi’s expectation while deepening the rift between the men.

The fight between the pro- and anti-PAS camps has been elevated to a level that Rafizi vows to push for an EGM to settle the dispute.

Once it goes to the voting, the party will invariably face the risk of an official split. De facto leader Anwar Ibrahim is forced to make a statement.

He approves a talk with PAS, much to the frustration of Rafizi and his anti-PAS team.

But the VP is not conceding defeat just that, arguing that Anwar has made the decision without being adequately informed of the actual situation.

Everyone knows that the decision has not been made in a rush. The visit by Kak Wan and Azmin of Hadi Awang last month has unofficially stated the party’s stand.

The question is, PKR’s stand is in stark contrast to that of PH. The other component parties — DAP, PPBM and Amanah — have expressed their reluctance to work with PAS, while the recent PH supreme council meeting confirmed that it would not cooperate with PAS and was ready for possible three-cornered fights.

Mahathir’s attitude is unambiguous: a complete break with PAS, one that is apparently different from Anwar’s.

Perhaps to Mahathir this gives his PPBM a chance to replace PAS, but to Anwar, it could be a bomb that blows up PKR's hold of Selangor.

Will the Rafizi-Azmin strife be expanded into an internal conflict within PH? That will very much depend on the wisdom of the pact's leaders.

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Source: <http://www.malaysia-today.net/the-divisive-factor/>