

Hadi sympathises with Dr Mahathir

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ALOR STAR: They were at odds over almost everything for years.

But the cold war between Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang and Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad may see a thaw, at least from the Pas president's perspective.

Hadi has thrown in his lot with Dr Mahathir over the former prime minister's criticism of Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The Pas chief said yesterday that Dr Mahathir's views needed to be considered. "Don't just reject his views wholesale as there are points that need to be considered."

Describing the former prime minister as a "respected figure" with "special qualities", Hadi, who in the 1980s issued a decree labelling Umno "infidel", said Pas' offer to Dr Mahathir to speak out was not manipulation.

"We gave him a platform to speak out when he was sacked from the party by Tunku Abdul Rahman.

"We never forgot that, and we are willing to do it again, if he wants it, and if Umno refuses to allow him to speak.

"He is not a person who can easily be manipulated because he's his own man."

Hadi noted that during Dr Mahathir's

tenure, "no minister dared to raise issues such as Malay rights and the position of Islam".

"Now, whether the rakyat realises it or not, a 'bootlicking culture' (*budaya mengampu*) exists in Umno. Whoever becomes Prime Minister, he will be the one they toady to, and this is not good."

Despite their past differences, Hadi noted there were many occasions where Pas was in agreement with Dr Mahathir.

"Pas was with Dr Mahathir on Bosnia, where he played a big role in terms of the welfare (of Bosnians)."