

# Heal the rift quickly

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## Prolonged row could hurt country, say veterans

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Two veteran Umno leaders - Tun Musa Hitam and Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah - have described the outburst by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad as having serious implications on the nation.

Describing the Prime Minister's response as "elegant silence," Musa said Abdullah had done the right thing by not reacting.

He said that despite the harsh and unconventional manner in which Dr Mahathir had launched his criticism of the Government, he was impressed that Abdullah and Najib had not retaliated.

He said that although the Prime Minister and his deputy had responded in different ways it was clear they were acting in congruence and as a team.

He was also encouraged by the way Najib had urged the Cabinet and the party to rally behind



**Musa:** Abdullah and Najib acting in congruence and as a team

Abdullah.

"The way they have done it is reflective of their maturity in handling this issue," said Musa.

Tengku Razaleigh urged Abdullah and Dr Mahathir to meet as soon as possible for the sake of the nation.

"They should not prolong this rift as it has serious implications on the country," he added.

Tengku Razaleigh pointed out that Abdullah needed to work hard



**Tengku Razaleigh:** Both must meet soon for sake of the nation

to meet the people's wishes as they had given him a huge mandate in the last General Election.

Asked whether he thought Dr Mahathir had bankrupted the country because of mega projects, the Gua Musang MP said: "That may not be the case, but nevertheless Pak Lah has to plan comprehensively on the economy."

Another party veteran Datuk Seri Mohd Yusoff Latiff, 76, who is also

Penang Malay Association (Pemenang) president, said instigations could have led Dr Mahathir to make such harsh remarks against Abdullah.

"I think mis-information could have led to this fiasco," he said.

"I also firmly believe that Abdullah will never backstab Dr Mahathir. It is not Abdullah's character."

Datuk Johari Baharum, who was a former political secretary to both Abdullah and Dr Mahathir, said Abdullah was a strong supporter of Dr Mahathir when he served in the former premier's Cabinet.

He said Abdullah had not forgotten the services of Dr Mahathir and was grateful, and had never criticised the former premier despite he himself being sharply criticised.

Johari, who is Deputy Internal Security Minister, said Abdullah's way of running the country was different from Dr Mahathir's, but that did not mean there was no continuity.

All the policies of the previous government were being continued by Abdullah without change, he said, urging the media not to "blow up" the issue.