

From partisan to non-partisan

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Adam, a long-time friend of mine, rang recently.

The call was unexpected and the topic too. He expressed his thoughts on the Kajang by-election that is happening this month.

Adam gives his full support to Datuk Zaid Ibrahim. He is someone that doesn't require any introduction: Zaid has in the past helmed several positions. He was formerly the Minister in the Prime Minister Department, an Umno member, a PKR member, a Member of Parliament for Kota Baru and Kita chief.

His inclination caught me by surprise as I thought he would be in favour with the leader of opposition, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

In the past, Adam and I have had numerous disagreements over our political views. When we first knew each other, there was no Pakatan Rakyat (PR).

Adam used to be a supporter of Barisan Nasional (BN). Anything about BN was “right” for him back then.

Then, the 2008 political tsunami happened and his viewpoint changed, just like many other Malaysians. It was an awakening.

He came to realise that something wasn't right with the Malaysian political system and he became a supporter of PR.

Anything coming from PR was “right” for him. But such standpoint doesn't last long.

Several years after the political tsunami and close to a year after the 13th general election, Malaysians get to see more of PR's “ability”.

In the struggle for power and the confidence of the people, both the BN and PR are making use of political smear tactics and tricks to achieve their goals.

Now, Adam said it is time to do the right thing and he is now “non-partisan”.

Adam is not the alone in this. So what actually went wrong?

Prior to the formation of PR in 2008, many other initiatives for a “Third Force” occurred. For example, a civil society movement was launched by the name, Barisan Rakyat (BR) in early 2008. BR was a coalition of six non-BN political parties from the peninsular, and Sabah and Sarawak to balance up the domination of BN.

The idea was convened by The People’s Parliament's founder Haris Ibrahim, which witnessed the support from six political parties for the initiative – Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM), PKR, DAP, PAS, Malaysian Democratic Party (MDP) and the United Pasok Nunukragang National Organization (Pasok). DAP leader Lim Kit Siang however made a press statement denying that BR was an opposition effort.

These six parties endorsed a “People’s Declaration” to challenge BN in the election.

The 19-page People’s Declaration proposed a range of reforms to promote unity, democracy, administrative transparency, sustainable development, and more. While its sister document, the People’s Voice, called for the rejection of race-based political governance of the country.

But such effort do not last. Later on, the formation of Malaysian Civil Liberties Movement (MCLM) also failed to capture the hearts of Malaysians.

Since 2008, Malaysian political landscape has been transformed dramatically. The political tsunami has polarised Malaysians, to a point where either you are with them or against them.

We have the ruling regime BN who are desperately attracting supporters by giving various goodies, but at the same time failing to deliver and implement socio-economic policies for their people.

At the same time, we have PR who provides a different approach to Malaysians by focusing on civil liberties and human rights.

As Malaysians are getting more accessible to information on BN and PR through social media, now they could judge better.

Not to mention, the level of political awareness of Malaysians have also increased within these few years.

BN's and PR's Kajang gambit serve as a good example, as it revealed their weaknesses.

(PR's internal struggle was revealed, or to be more precisely within PKR.)

Many voters, who are against the BN, voted for PR in the past elections not because they think PR is the best choice. It is just that they have no choice.

Adam thinks enough is enough. So this time around, he vows to choose Zaid Ibrahim.

That reminds me of the famous song by the late Florence Reece, "Which Side Are You On?". One of the lyrics sounds like this, "Don't scab for the bosses, don't listen to their lies. Us poor folks haven't got a chance, unless we organise". – March 3, 2014.

** This is the personal opinion of the writer or publication and does not necessarily represent the views of The Malaysian Insider.*
