

Najib's state of desperation
Malaysiakini.com
February 14, 2011

When the Egyptian people finally drove their president from power on Feb 11, our Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak was quick to try to quash any lingering thoughts we harboured, about similarities between Egypt and Malaysia.

He musnajib egypt democracy crisist be desperate and the news must have given him nightmares. His first thought must have been of losing office and being put on trial for a string of crimes - some of these capital crimes.

He said: "Firstly, we cannot equate what is happening in Egypt with Malaysia because things are very different in the two countries."

Then he stressed that the crucial difference between the two countries was that BN practises 'People First' policies.

He said: "We have known since early on that we need to put the people first. So whatever we do in our plans and our policies, we prioritise the people. And if we do that, the people will be with the government.

"The people will also understand that as long as we put the people's interest first and understand the desires of the people, they will feel the effects and benefits by the government."

Earlier in the week, he had warned Malaysians that he would crush any copycat attempts to overthrow his administration.

He said: "Currently, there are demonstrations and activities to bring down the government by force in certain countries. These things need not happen here. We (the government) will not allow (this) to happen here."

President Hosni Mubarak did not want it to happen in Egypt either - but it did!

Najib knows his average Malaysian very well. Some are consumed by apathy and will plod on in unfavourable conditions rather than fight for improvement. Others are controlled by a mixture of fear and division.

'Disuniting' factors

Therefore, Najib is right to say that an Internet-driven revolution, like that in Egypt, will not happen in Malaysia.

First. We are not united, unlike the Egyptians. Both Muslim and Christian Egyptians had one common goal; to force Mubarak out of office. Malaysians, both Malay and non-Malay, are guided by racial and religious intolerance at every stage and station of their lives. From the time a non-Malay is born, he can expect discrimination in his schooling, choice of jobs, purchase of a house and more.

Even buying roses on Feb 14 is misconstrued as championing Christian beliefs, according to

one misguided and ignorant Malay motivational speaker on television. This is Najib's '1Malaysia' which he once claimed is Malaysia's "strength and remains our best hope for the future". Where most people see racial barriers, Najib and his administration only visualise "unity through diversity".

Najib's '1Malaysia' is nothing but institutionalised racism. Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his successors have managed to drive a wedge between all of us. Their motto might as well be 'Divide and rule'.

Second. The army was behind the people and it stepped in when Mubarak instructed his police force to use violence. Egyptians loathe their police and especially their secret police. Can we place the same trust in our army to protect us?

Malaysians try to hold peaceful protests, but they cannot prevent the police from starting violence. Water cannon and tear gas are routinely used in peaceful demonstrations.

Only yesterday, the police detained 59 Hindraf and Human Rights Party members in Negri Sembilan, Perak, Selangor and Kuala Lumpur for running a convoy to protest against 'Interlok'.

Najib and his cronies, have everything to lose. He will not hesitate to unleash the police and his reserve of 2.5 million Rela members to keep us in check.

Didn't Mahathir recently claim that he had no control over the police? Perhaps Najib will pass the buck in the same way, when things go drastically wrong.

Plainclothes policemen and Rela members will try to infiltrate the peaceful demonstrations. They will intimidate and injure those protesting against the system, to teach them a lesson in repression. There will be chaos and violence. It happened in Egypt. It has happened in Malaysia.

Perhaps, government-paid extremists might also hold counter-marches. We would then have a potentially lethal mix of pro- and anti-government demonstrations. Najib will then bring in 'emergency law' and lock up opposition leaders.

He pre-warned us that he will come down hard on protesters when he said: "We will stop any attempt to bring such trouble into Malaysia or Sarawak." At the Umno general assembly last October, he said: "Even if our bodies are crushed and our lives lost, brothers and sisters, whatever happens, we must defend Putrajaya."

Third. There are huge slush funds to be distributed to buy off those who might cause the eventual downfall of the BN government. Those in power know that if one of them falls, the others will fall too. It is not just politicians. There are people outside the political parties; the cronies of the politicians who have built up their business empires from being friendly with the politicians. They, too, have as much to lose.

The politicians, their cronies, the tainted judiciary and police, have many secrets to keep hidden. If the BN politicians are displaced, their soiled linen will be laundered in public. It looks like our corrupt government and its cronies are more united than the rakyat.

Main difference

Nevertheless, Najib is wrong to say there are no similarities between Egypt and

Malaysia. The Egyptian demonstrations were started by the young, who were mainly students. They galvanised the people using Twitter, Facebook and Google.

In both Tunisia and Egypt, the revolution did NOT start because they were instigated or motivated by an opposition party. The uprising happened as a spontaneous reaction because the people were fed up with their repressive governments. The reasons were mainly financial. They were angry with life in the autocratic police state and of poor living conditions, economic stagnation, unemployment, corruption and police abuses.

The Egyptians had voting irregularities, just like us. We have vote-rigging and vote buying, but our government ignores complaints about this corruption. Our ministers who are allegedly guilty of serious crimes like assault, murder and rape, go unpunished.

Ministers, who are implicated in corruption and siphon vast sums of money out of the country, are rarely investigated. So, until we become more politically and socially mature there will be no uprising, peaceful or otherwise. We are also selfish and just want to get on with our lives. We refuse to take charge of our lives to make life better for everyone.

The terrible social and economic conditions which galvanised the Egyptians are similar to ours. The difference between the two countries, is its people. The Egyptians proved that, with a desire for change and an Internet connection, anything is possible.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/155969>