

Najib's ridiculous doctorate
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As an Australian and an ardent advocate of freedom and human rights, I'm outraged by Monash University's proposed awarding of an honorary doctorate this Friday at its Melbourne campus to Malaysia's Prime Minister, or as my old mate Antares more accurately characterises him, Crime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

This man and his Umno/BN colleagues and cronies are as big a burden and blight on Malaysia as the Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali clan was on Tunisia, the Mubarak regime on Egypt, and the Gaddafi gang on Libya.

Najib has even declared, Gaddafi style, that he and his Umno party must stay determined to cling onto power at all costs, "even if our bodies are crushed and our lives lost."

And in case anyone imagined he was engaging in empty rhetoric, Umno Youth are engaging in military-style training and Umno's sinister 'volunteer force', Rela, is reportedly on a mission to achieve a membership of more than two million by sometime this year.

Meanwhile Najib is mounting an international charm offensive to try and hide the harm he and his cronies have been doing the Malaysian people.

Employing the services of the notorious Apco Worldwide, PR consultants and lobbyists for dubious causes and countries, to arrange 'humanitarian' awards for his widely-loathed 'first lady' Rosmah Mansor and invent a veneer of respectability for himself.

Though the campaign's not working as well as it might, as Najib's carefully-scripted words are inevitably given the lie by his nefarious works.

As Mariam Mokhtar and others has recently noted, Najib and other senior Umno/BN figures have been loudly proclaiming the difference between their regime and embattled kleptocracies elsewhere, even to the extent of condemning the use of force against demonstrators.

Yet recent racial-equality rallies in Malaysia have been dispersed with similar force, and dozens of protestors summarily arrested. And of course the never-ending persecution of Malaysia's opposition leader, Anwar Ibrahim, is still in progress, as his trial on a second charge of sodomy pursues its dismal course.

Then there's the fact that the Anwar case, as outrageous as it is in itself, is far from unique. Ever since former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad decimated the nation's formerly independent judiciary back in the 1980s, Malaysia has been infamous for its politically-compliant judges and kangaroo courts.

With the word 'kangaroo' inevitably evoking thoughts of Australia, and Najib's performance revealing him as a snake-in-the-grass in the legal field, the discussion naturally turns to what on earth Monash University is thinking of in its intention to award this person an honorary degree of doctor of laws.

Esoteric in-joke?

Could it be some kind of esoteric intellectual in-joke? Or a quid pro quo for the Najib government's recent, unprecedented granting of RM1.1 million (A\$361,000) in research grants to academic staff of the Monash campus in Sunway, KL?

Or, given that surely no university worthy of the name would sell its favours so ridiculously cheap, is it simply just a dreadful mistake?

Alternatively, perhaps there's a clue to be found in Monash's rather curious motto, "ancora imparo" or "I am still learning."

Though on second thoughts surely no Australian university could be such a lamentably slow learner as to be ignorant of Najib's highly compromised personal reputation, let alone his appalling record as prime minister of Malaysia.

Far from deserving an honorary degree, let alone a doctorate of laws, Najib fails miserably on Monash University's own website-proclaimed values: diversity, innovation and creativity, international focus, fairness, integrity, engagement and self-reliance.

Najib's Malaysia has diversity all right, especially of races and religions, and Najib and his Umno/BN goons work tirelessly to keep these diverse groups as divided and unequal as possible.

As for innovation and creativity, all that Najib has innovated and created in the term of his premiership is his "1Malaysia" slogan. And this is just a lame and lying attempt to cover up his government's above-mentioned divide-and-rule policy.

When it comes to 'international focus', all that Najib and his government appear to have achieved in the global arena is a grossly ill-deserved image as a bridge between moderate Islam and the West, all the while winking at international crimes like people-smuggling and the traffic of illicit weapons components, and providing aid and comfort to embargoed regimes like Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe.

Which brings us to the qualities of 'fairness' and 'integrity', both of which appear entirely lacking in Najib and his Umno/BN regime.

Besides racial and religious divisiveness, the Malaysian government conspires to keep itself in power through grossly iniquitous gerrymandering of electoral boundaries and blatant bribery of voters.

It feeds the populace a pack of lies through the regime-monopolised mass media and suppresses dissenting opinion through its ruthlessly-enforced if unconstitutional Printing Presses and Publications Act.

It robs the Malaysian people blind with a monstrous system of everything from kickbacks, 'commissions' and crony contracting to blatant fraud, embezzlement and outright theft.

Pernicious system

It protects this whole pernicious system with a police force that's clearly in league with organised crime, an anti-corruption commission that's a standing joke, and a legal system that routinely fails to prosecute the perpetrators of homicide by the forces of so-called law and order.

And the most notorious nexus of corruption and murder in recent Malaysian history, the shooting and explosive dismembering of Altantuya Shaariibuu, a Mongolian translator involved in the apparently corrupt purchase of French submarines, occurred when Najib was defence minister.

Coincidentally, perhaps, the man most outspoken in insisting that Najib was personally implicated in this crime, Raja Petra Kamarudin (right) of Malaysia-today.net, is currently visiting Australia.

Now living in self-exile in the UK and thus safe from Malaysian 'justice', RPK is scheduled to speak at several Australian universities including Sydney and ANU in his role as chairman of the Malaysian Civil Liberties Movement (MCLM).

As a true Malaysian freedom-fighter and former inmate of Kamunting prison under the Umno/BN government's iniquitous Internal Security Act, he'd be a far worthier recipient of an honorary degree than a repressor and robber of the people like Najib.

And surely, as a man without any discernible honour, the Right Honourable Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak has enough fancy honorifics to his name. In any case it would pay him to learn that the longer your title gets, the more ridiculous it makes you look. Or, as they say in Texas about suspicious displays of grandiosity, "the bigger the hat, the smaller the ranch."

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