

A trail of lost lives
Malaysiakini.com
June 1, 2011

When Najib Abdul Razak roused the rabble at last year's Umno general assembly with the declaration that "even if our bodies are crushed and our lives lost, brothers and sisters, whatever happens, we must defend Putrajaya," of course he was kidding.

What he actually meant, quite clearly, was to issue the threat that others' bodies would be crushed and their lives lost if they attempted to put an end to Umno/BN's putrid occupation of Putrajaya.

Hence his government's increasingly vicious assaults on the opposition by its paid assassins in 'newspapers' like Utusan Malaysia, and its covert but obvious enlistment of the race-hate group Perkasa in support of the cause.

Then there's the reinforcement by Najib's cousin, Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein (left), of the paramilitary 'defence' force, Rela, as both a vote-bank for the forthcoming general election and a mercenary brigade of goons to help Umno/BN to retain power in the event that it loses despite all its forces of electoral bullying, bribery and fraud.

And now it seems that Najib is hell-bent on recruiting child-soldiers for his criminal crusade. Seizing on the pretext of World Youth Day to lure several thousand young Malaysians to Putridjaya for a fake '1 Million Youth Gathering', then ambushing them with a barrage of his lying propaganda.

"You see one million youths in Tahrir Square, they had gathered there to bring the government down," he ranted, "but here, one million youths have gathered to defend the government. Will you defend Putrajaya with me?"

Then, after leading his captive audience in three cheers of "defend Putrajaya", he mingled with the mini-multitude along with his Minister for Youth and Sport, Shabery Cheek. How long can Malaysians at large tolerate the toll of crushed bodies and lost lives that Umno/BN's defence of Putridjaya has already cost those deemed expendable by this appalling regime?

For example, who could forget Internet-distributed pictures of the savagely-beaten corpse of A Kugananthan, just one of countless 'suspects' who have been killed in custody or in 'shoot-outs' with Umno/BN's shock-troops, the 'Royal' Malaysian police.

Then there's the perennial massacre on Malaysian roads due to the criminal negligence of the same police force to enforce traffic and vehicle safety regulations instead of setting-up bribe-generating roadblocks and acting as security guards to protect the Umno/BN regime from the slightest sign of public protest.

And what about the 'mysterious' death of Teoh Beng Hock while in the custody of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), Umno/BN's selective prosecutor of any corruption but its own, and the endless proceedings of the cover-up 'Royal Commission' into this atrocity?

The most notorious lost life of all, of course, among those threatening Umno/BN's death-grip on Putridjaya, was that of Altantuya Shaariibuu, the Mongolian translator and mistress of Razak Baginda, the bag-man in the Scorpene Submarine purchase, whose broken or rather C4-exploded body turned up in a patch of jungle in KL.

The memory of Altantuya and the travesty of a trial that the powers-that-be organised for two low-level suspects in her killing will haunt Razak Baginda, his boss Najib and the entire Umno/BN regime forever, or at least until their dying days.

Days that, at least politically speaking, are drawing inexorably closer. And despite Najib's desperate bluster about his and Umno/BN's determination to defend Putridjaya with their broken bodies and even their lives, the only bodies broken and lives lost will be those of a few of their low-level supporters and lots of ordinary Malaysians.

Dying for an end to Umno/BN's occupancy

Whether these Malaysians will die at the hands of the police, Rela, Perkasa or even the armed forces as they fight for freedom and justice like their fellows in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain, or succumb more slowly to the emissions from rare-earths-minerals processing plants or literally in a blaze of glory, glowing in the dark with radiation from meltdowns in Umno/BN's proposed nuclear-power installations, who can predict?

Looking on the bright side, of course there's always the off-chance that there could be so many Malaysians figuratively dying for an end to Umno/BN's occupancy of Putridjaya that they'll simply vote them out of office in the next general election and, as I suggested some time ago, turn Putrajaya into a Putrajail for the current occupants.

Charging them with crimes against the people for all the crushed bodies and lost lives they've caused already, as the Egyptians are doing with the Hosni Mubarak gang, and in the process also relieving them of their ill-begotten billions.

Or handing them over to the International Criminal Court, as the Libyans will almost certainly eventually do with Muammar Gadaffi.

But my guess is that when the crunch finally comes, for all of Najib's crushed-bodies and lost-lives rhetoric, the misleaders of the Umno/BN regime, far from fighting to the death, will leave their erstwhile allies and supporters for dead. Just as the Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali regime in Tunisia did when it fled to Saudi Arabia, home for deposed dictators like the late homicidal maniac, Idi Amin.

In other words, when scum like Umno/BN start talking dead bodies, you can be sure it's not their own they're referring to, but, as always, those of the people they believe they're born to rule and rob, and who had better learn to live with if not love their victimhood, or else learn to keep their grievances dead quiet.

DEAN JOHNS, after many years in Asia, currently lives with his Malaysian-born wife and daughter in Sydney, where he mentors creative writing groups. Already published in Kuala Lumpur is a third book of his columns for Malaysiakini, following earlier collections 'Mad about Malaysia' and 'Even Madder about Malaysia'.