

'Emperor' Najib's 'democratic' clothes
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COMMENT Recent events have sent my thoughts hurtling towards a Hans Christian Andersen tale. An evergreen classic, The Emperor's New Clothes carries lessons true and bold. It tells of an emperor, whose pride and arrogance led to him to being stripped naked before his subjects.

This is a tale that should be told to all would-be 'emperors', including our very own Premier Najib Abdul Razak.

There he struts, our Mr Najib, with his shiny pinkish lips, in his 'moderate' and 'democratic' clothes, like a peacock preening before the world, in his attempt to woo its leaders.

He claims the mantle of an exemplar of a 'moderate' Islamic state and a 'democratic' modern nation, though it is apparently still at war with communists and is highly allergic to the colour yellow. Could it be an adverse reaction to botox? We may never know.

He is assisted perhaps by the RM70 million worth of a public relations firm's 'strategic influence' over Washington insiders, friendly if obscure press, generically generated think-tanks and the media relations staff of a re-election seeking and waning US President Barack Obama.

It was a tale told by a handshake and a pat on the shoulder of Najib, in return for fast-tracking a new law to fight the passage of strategic materials, ironically, in a land much criticised for the transit of illicit funds, illegal wildlife and traffic in human beings.

But events at home have begun to peel away at Najib's 'moderate' facade and 'democratic' skin. In this case, 'democracy' is indeed skin deep and 'moderate' no longer lies in the eye of the tear-gassed beholder.

For despite the distance he put between himself and the federal capital of Kuala Lumpur, where police batons smacked his iron will upon peaceful Bersih 2.0 supporters, it is undeniable that he presided over the brutal crackdown against the rally for electoral reforms.

It was as if he himself fired tear gas directly into the crowd and showered them with chemically laced water. His onerous endeavour is aided perhaps by the crass exhortations of his cohorts, unwittingly, disingenuously, or perhaps by wanton mischievous intention.

After all, when Najib took down his predecessor, former premier Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (left), more affectionately known as Pak Lah, it was in a brutal internecine bushwhack, initiated by former Pak Lah strongman Muhyiddin Yassin, who is now Najib's deputy.

One has to wonder if history is going to repeat itself, and if another Umno warlord who happens to be deputy premier, would prod others to backstab a sitting prime minister, to his advantage. Et tu Muhyiddin?

Oh how Caesar would laugh, or is that now Pak Lah?

Usual list of suspects

Anyhow, here goes the list of usual suspects.

The soft-spoken and genteel Health Minister Liow Tiong Lai, who came out to defend abhorrent police action against unarmed protesters near a maternity hospital, declaring void the multitudes of photographic and video evidence of unbecoming police conduct.

Despite the mountains of evidence, he repeatedly said that only his word and that of the hospital

administrator, after being closeted with him in a meeting room, should count and that should lay rest to the matter.

No tear gas nor chemical laced water was fired into the Tung Shin Hospital he said.

And who can forget Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein, whose soft velvety touch did hold the hammer that smashed upon the peaceful rally and from whose elegant tongue did spout the condemnation of the word for clean and the colour of the sun.

He may have tried to pass the responsibility to the police top guns under his purview, but like Najib, the buck also stops at his door, at least regarding the conduct of the police forces on that ignominious day.

Thus our Najib strutted along stripped of his 'moderate' and 'democratic' clothes, as layers and layers of his put-on attire were stripped before the eyes of Londoners as he arrived to meet British PM David Cameron and Her Majesty the Queen over tea and scones.

A bit unfortunate perhaps, that on the streets are arrayed demonstrators in solidarity with those he so brutally put down on July 9, and others arbitrarily arrested prior to that.

Too bad the Metropolitan Police did not answer to Najib's beck and call. Else he would have shown them what for.

And so he had to swallow hard and tolerate the frog in his throat, still refusing to face up to his deeds. No, Ibrahim Ali was not there, just as he and his merry band of Perkasa warriors did not show up on the streets during the Bersih 2.0 weekend. A figure of speech as it were.

Najib's discomfiture, is a re-enactment perhaps of his 'damage control' walk on Kuala Lumpur streets observing non-existent damage caused by phantom riotous protesters that exist only in mainstream media reports.

And now he hopes to see the Pope. If when in Rome, one truly does as Romans do, we hope that Najib knows which Romans to emulate.

Not the example of emperors like Nero who ordered innocent people to their deaths, but that of the more compassionate holder of the Papal seat and crest.

Whither Najib, o my Najib?

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