

Crumbs for the chickens
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Najib Abdul Razak must take Malaysians for very dumb clucks indeed if he thinks that contemptuously throwing them a few crumbs of fake reform is going to keep him and his foul Umno/BN regime in control for much longer.

As chicken as a majority of Malaysians may have been in the past to rise up and throw this regime off its dunghill, fewer and fewer seem to quail at the thought these days. In fact millions are metaphorically dying for the chance to knock Umno/BN off its perch and wring its sorry neck.

In half a century of ruling the roost through a system of government 'of the people, by the people, pluck the people', and simultaneously both feathering and fouling its own nest, Umno/BN seems to have finally cooked its goose.

Former cock-of-the-walk Dr Mohamad Mahathir seems to realise this, and is sticking his beak in as always, this time urging the government to delay the next general election.

And in the same breath, he flies in the face of the fact of his own 'Ops Lalang' atrocity to declare that the Internal Security Act (ISA) should not be used to stifle political dissent, but rather the hearts and minds of the people should be won with "logical arguments".

But logical arguments are by no means this bird-brained regime's strong point. In fact nothing these Umno/BN turkeys say makes the slightest sense or contains so much as a grain of reason, intelligence, integrity or truth.

For example, Najib is clearly intending to abolish the ISA in name only and replace it with not just one, but two similar Acts of bastardry. Or as an unidentified Umno operative reportedly told Asia Sentinel: "Other countries have provisions for detention without trial. Since the ISA has been stigmatised as draconian, (we) can just get another law."

Even pro-ISA activists have dubbed Najib's stated intention of abolishing the ISA as a fraud, with Mohd Khairul Azam Abdul Aziz (left), legal advisor to Gabungan NGO Pembela Negara, clucking that the "spirit" of the ISA remains intact, and that Najib's apparently progressive move is nothing but a "rebranding process".

As fake as his ISA 'reform' plans are - just like his royal commissions, electoral commission, '1Malaysia' slogan and every word he utters - Najib is determined to deprive democracy activists and the opposition of any credit for egging him into action.

Speaking at an event called 'Sirih Pulang ke Gagang' (literally 'a return to the fold', which I must admit smacks more of an audience of sheep than of chickens), he declared: "Don't anyone try to claim credit, saying that my announcement is due to their efforts. It is not due to their struggle but a decision made by BN after listening to the desires of the rakyat."

Going on to claim that his review of the ISA is in keeping with his plans when he took over the prime ministership two years ago, but omitting to explain why he left it so long, he then took off on one of his typical flights of fancy, claiming that "Malaysian society now is a knowledge society which demands renewal to assure the people's future as well as civil liberties".

And since then, he has raised the level of his rhetoric to even more ludicrous heights, telling the faithful who flocked to his Aidilfitri open house that his repeal of the ISA is part of "an effort to make Malaysia the best democracy in the world".

Excuse me while I have a cackle at this.

Poisonous PPPA

Najib has no more intention to foster democracy or civil liberties than a chicken has lips. And if his fake ISA reform agenda isn't enough to demonstrate this, how about his proposals for 'liberalising' the Printing Presses and Publications Act (PPPA)?

Coming soon: A one-off licence instead of annual renewal. But no change whatever to the substance of the pernicious PPPA, by which the government exercises unrestricted power over all serial publications.

This includes the 'right' of the home minister to revoke licences at any time, and without a reason being assigned. The decision cannot be subjected to judicial review.

In a timely reminder of how poisonous the PPPA is and will continue to be under Najib's so-called 'reform' package, the Home Ministry has refused Malaysiakini's appeal against the rejection of its application for a publishing licence last year with the arrogant comment that "publishing is a privilege, not a right".

And Deputy Home Minister Abu Seman Yusop (left) added insult to this injury to the people's democratic right to be informed by a free media with the remark that the rejection of the application had "nothing to do with the suppression of freedom of speech", as the news portal's staff had "always been free to publish news on their website".

In short, Najib's proposed so-called 'reforms' are so paltry as to be nothing but cosmetic, and typically all about perception and nothing whatever to do with reality.

But the evident fakery of it all didn't stop Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin from crowing that Najib's moves were as "bold and courageous" as they were "unexpected and radical".

"The new paradigm manifests the courage of our leadership," he claimed, before cautioning "certain quarters" not to be so prejudiced as to write Najib's reformist agenda off as a "sweetener" ahead of the general election.

Which is precisely what the whole scam is, of course. A cheap (cheep?) attempt to divert the electorate's attention from the total lack of progress in every aspect of Malaysia that is crying out for genuine reform.

This covers the politicised, ineffectual and outright homicidal police force and MACC; the scandalously compromised judiciary; the crooked electoral commission; and the system of massive corruption infesting the Umno/BN government, civil service and crony corporations.

But from all the comments I've seen, most Malaysians are so sick of being conned that they're no longer swallowing the scraps and crap that this chickenshit regime continuously feeds them.

And the harder Najib and his fellow coxcombs duck and weave and scratch around for more ways to outfox them, the more determined the people are to transform Umno/BN from self-styled rooster to feather duster.

DEAN JOHNS, after many years in Asia, currently lives with his Malaysian-born wife and daughter in Sydney, where he coaches and mentors writers and authors and practises as a writing therapist. Published books of his columns for Malaysiakini include 'Mad about Malaysia', 'Even Madder about Malaysia', 'Missing Malaysia' and '1Malaysia.con'.