

More drivel from the 'driver'
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By Dean Johns

Given my life-long fascination with words and their tricky meanings and psychological significance, I've long been intrigued by Najib Abdul Razak's verbal capacity for highlighting whatever realities he is most desperate to hide.

His every utterance is precisely the reverse of the clearly observable truth, as in his ridiculous claims of "zero tolerance of corruption" and "transparent governance" in support of his aim to transform his "1Malaysia" into "the world's best democracy".

And, as I discussed at length back in an April 2010 column titled "Reading Najib's lips", his fanciful speeches and false statements are riddled with self-revealing Freudian (fraudian?) slips.

Two years ago, as you may or may not recall, the word most uppermost on Najib's mind seemed to be "model". But his repeated use of it at the time, far from convincing us of his claim that then US administration considered Malaysia a "model" nation, or of the worth of Najib's own "New Economic Model", rather served to remind us of suspicions of his implication in the murder of Mongolian "model" Altantuya Shaariibuu.

A more recent terminological obsession intended to make a positive statement has been that of "honorary doctorate".

But in unintended reversals of message that would have delighted Dr Freud, the awarding of this "honour" to Najib by Monash University served only to remind most of us of his capacity for nothing but spin-doctoring, and the honorary doctorate that Curtin University gave his spouse, self-styled first lady of Malaysia, Rosmah Mansor, for most of us merely confirmed her as deserving of a PhD in retail therapy.

And now Najib has come up with another figure of speech that, rather than causing the Malaysian people to reel back spellbound at the magic of his words, shows every sign of turning into a self-inflicted wound.

In a typically patronising television address to the simple-minded masses, he has characterised himself as the "driver" of the metaphorical "moving vehicle" of Malaysia, and warned against the dangers of changing the driver part-way through the journey.

"To ensure that the vehicle arrives safely at its destination in the allocated time, do not experiment with changing the driver whose ability has already been proven," he urged.

"Do not replace it with a dangerous and suspicious driver halfway through, do not make the wrong choice," he added, in case his audience had missed the point that they should avoid voting for the opposition.

Taking Malaysians for a ride for decades

The trouble with this "driver" analogy, of course, as countless scornful citizens couldn't help commenting, is that Najib and his fellow big wheels in Umno/BN have been driving Malaysia into the ground and taking Malaysians for a ride for decades.

And this is nowhere more evident than on the nation's roads. Where, due to the same spirit of reckless abandon with which Najib and his co-drivers pretend to run the country, Malaysians are killed or maimed at ten times the rate of their counterparts in countries whose governments take road-safety seriously.

And instead of doing something about stemming this tide of slaughter and helping people reach their destinations safely, Umno/BN's police are a positive obstacle to progress.

Failing in their duty to enforce the traffic rules in favour of creating roadblocks for the purpose of soliciting bribes, or preventing demonstrators from reaching their assembly points, or causing even more massive jams than usual in attempts to turn the populace against street protesters.

And even the everyday jams that make Malaysian motorists' lives such a misery are a symptom of Umno/BN's appallingly pedestrian performance in the planning and construction of a proper public transport system.

Then there's the "my grandfather's road" mentality with which the regime arrogantly imposes ever-more frequent and expensive tolls on the long-suffering citizenry, for the sole purpose of enriching themselves and their cronies.

And as if such massive highway-robbery wasn't enough to steer more and more Malaysians toward the opposition in the forthcoming election, there's Najib's appalling record of U-turns on all his promises of reform.

NONE For example, the electoral machinery so precision-engineered and fine-tuned for the purpose of keeping Malaysia in Umno/BN's clutches is still humming along regardless of a token parliamentary inquiry.

That cunning device for keeping the brakes on the freedom of the news media, the Printing Presses and Publications Act, is still firmly in force. And Najib is so far from reforming the thing as he promised to that the other night at the ludicrous mainstream press awards he actually promised to put the "reforms" into reverse with legislation regulating the online media.

Lack of drive on graft

Najib and his passengers in the Umno/BN bus have also been showing a lamentable lack of drive when it comes to dealing with Umno/BN corruption and other crimes.

azlan The National Feedlot Corporation (NFC) scandal, now popularly known as "Cowgate", remains as unresolved as countless other financial atrocities before it.

And there is still no sign of any action on the cases of Teoh Beng Hock, Ananthan Kugan or any of countless other "suspects" killed in the custody of so-called law-enforcement agencies. Or any glimmer of willingness to investigate allegations of complicity between senior police, the attorney-general and organised crime figures.

So that all in all, whatever kind of vehicle Najib Razak would like the Malaysian people to believe he's handling so well as to be irreplaceable behind the wheel, it's clearly by no means a high-performance vehicle.

Nor is he any great shakes as a driver. In fact he's at about the level of "L" as in "lembu", he's nothing but an accident looking for someplace to happen.

And in fact it's high time that the driv-el-spouting Najib and all his fellow road-hogs in Umno/BN were summarily ejected from the driver's seat they've occupied for way too long, and finally driven right out of office.

