

Uthaya on Hindraf's Cain and Abel situation

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"Shut up" - Hindraf statement to P Uthayakumar and MIC Youth chief T Mohan

INTERVIEW At this moment, it is very easy to demonise P Uthayakumar. No doubt Hindraf (or whatever it is now) and Uthayakumar have done their fair share of demonising of their political opponents. This is the nature of partisan and racial politics.

With my last article - and let's face facts, it was a polemic - I assumed I was done with Hindraf. As a Pakatan Rakyat partisan who was supportive of the aims of Hindraf (even though I was attacked by the racists within the ranks of Pakatan), the fact that P Waythamoorthy and Hindraf, embraced Umno and called for a return of a two-thirds majority after years of fighting the institutional racism that afflicts this country, was a move that for me at least was unforgivable.

NONE However, I still maintained contact with Uthayakumar (left). These days, most people who have always despised Uthayakumar gleefully, link his brother's "betrayal" to him. Mixed in with the usual racists comments about Hindraf, is the added bonus that Uthayakumar was complicit in Waythamoorthy's betrayal of the oppositional forces in this country.

In our conversations, Uthayakumar was adamant that he would never fall under the thrall of Umno and I believe him.

Some Hindraf supporters, those in Waythamoorthy's corner, do not agree with my partisan stand, but my response has always been, that when Hindraf under Waythamoorthy signed the MOU (memorandum of understanding) and when Waythamoorthy become a deputy minister in BN, they lost all claim to being simply a non-partisan non-governmental organisation. Hindraf, or the faction Waythamoorthy represents, is now part of the BN machinery.

I have always been very clear on where I stand, which is probably why Uthayakumar has always been a little wary of me. That said, he has never been shy about expressing his opinions even though they are politically incorrect.

In the first of this two-part interview, Uthayakumar speaks candidly about his younger brother. In the second part of this interview, he speaks honestly of his loss

in this recent general election and what he hopes will be the role of Hindraf he claims to represent.

As a counter view to this interview, readers are encouraged to read, articles written by noted Hindraf watcher, Joe Fernandez, specifically 'Uthaya-Waytha more sibling rivalry than sandiwara', 'Waythamoorthy not the main issue' and 'Chronology of PR/BN-Hindraf meetings and developments' by Dr Paraman Subramaniam which are on Joe's blog.

This interview will probably not change anybody's mind, but I do hope that right-thinking Malaysians, who although may not agree with what Uthayakumar says, will understand that he remains committed to speaking truth to power as he sees it.

What was your relationship with Waythamoorthy when he assumed 'control' of Hindraf?

Up until 2007, Waytha was such a greenhorn and so frightened that he even had asked me to call off the watershed Nov 25, 2007 Hindraf rally, as I was reminded by my ISA cellmate M Manoharan in a recent conversation.

As the most senior Hindraf activist of 16 years as of 2007 - and the ISA being my 10th arrest - as the decision maker, I ordered the rally to go on despite the severe Umno clampdown.

hindraf 5th anniversary 251112 waythamoorthy waytha moorthyWaytha (left) assumed control of Hindraf only with effect from the day I was jailed under the ISA on Dec 13, 2007. He had been my disciple since his primary school days, grew to become a supporter, camera operator, and his last posting was as my adviser.

During my detention, the Hindraf groundswell suddenly and unexpectedly shot to its peak. This was when Waytha harnessed all the grassroots support and financial contacts that was never really made known to me even after my release. This did not bother me very much because I was the activist and not the politician that Waytha was.

The next thing I know, Waytha tells me that he is the boss, just like the story of the Arab and his camel in the desert.

Why did you choose to remain silent when rumours were swirling that there was friction between the two of you?

For 57 long years, the Umno strategy was in successfully keeping the Indian minds diverted away from the gross institutionalised racism.

This was done by getting the Tamil dailies, mainstream media and forms of psychological warfare to promote and highlight the (former MIC chief S) Samy Vellu and (former MIC deputy chief S) Subra(maniam) fight, Samy Vellu and (PPP chief M) Kayveas and (former IPF chief MG) Pandithan, etc. The intra-Indian fight took centre stage when the real culprit was and is Umno.

The last thing I wanted was a public Uthaya and Waytha feud. I last spoke to Waytha about two years ago after the Bersih 2.0 rally. Despite pressure from within Hindraf and its political wing HRP (Human Rights Party) to sack Waytha for diverting from the original Hindraf 18-point demands; I was forced to hold back for the previously mentioned reasons.

I was very sensitive to political gossips that the brothers are squabbling for the leadership of Hindraf like the Samy-Subra fight - (providing) the sibling rivalry headline. So I kept playing down his personal agenda and kept telling supporters that I was playing the bad cop role while Waytha was playing the good cop role via his (Waytha) courting of Pakatan when he came back from London.

This was of course until Waytha joined Umno-BN when Hindraf and I, immediately distanced ourselves and within days had on April 25 sacked Waytha and his cronies from Hindraf.

Waythamoorthy attempted to make contact with you during the elections period, why did you decline to meet him?

NONEDuring elections and even after elections, Waytha has been trying to use even very close family members to get to me to speak to him.

My answer is simple; you speak to me before joining BN, not after joining. BN has never ever been the Hindraf struggle. That was not why I went to jail for. Probably I would have been better off running away.

Anyway, I do not speak to a Hindraf traitor.

Why did you not object to Hindraf under Waytha meeting with Umno-BN?

I had failed to even get Pakatan to talk to me in the almost four years until Waytha returned from London. So I let Waytha have it his way.

I was silent on Waytha meeting Umno, as I honestly believed that he was just trying to use Umno to pressure Pakatan to agree to the Hindraf demands. However, I had never ever imagined that he would actually join BN. I was shocked, devastated.

You called Waythamoorthy the new Samy Vellu. Do you think that any attempt to work with Umno will result in failure or a slide into corruption?

Yes, Waytha is the new Samy Vellu. As long as Umno and Pakatan refuse to cease its institutional racist policies, there will always be tension with the disenfranchised. Failure is inevitable with Umno because Umno has still refused to dismantle its institutional racist policies. As for corruption, I guess the natural Indian mandore order would follow.

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