

## **Muhyiddin lurches to the right after quiet spell**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**Aug 2, 2013**

**By Terence Netto**

COMMENT Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin 'fast draw' reaction to the most recent instance of an alleged insult to Islam was badly off the mark.

From remarks he made at a breaking of the fast function last Tuesday, he appears to have concluded that the video on YouTube that shows a woman cleaning her dogs while posting a Hari Raya greeting was a man and a non-Muslim.

NONEThe person in the offending video turned out to be a Muslim woman who is now under police remand.

The misperception by the DPM could readily be excused if not for what Muhyiddin proceeded to say after noting that "non-Muslims are insulting our religion."

He stated the premise for why non-Muslims ought not to insult Muslims: "Muslims do not insult the religion of non-Muslims such as Christianity and Hinduism."

He's right.

Muslims do not insult the religions of non-Muslims for the simple reason that they have too much respect for their own to want to do down that of others.

But the DPM has been misinformed or has simply forgotten that this general attitude of Muslims has been sporadically repudiated by people associated with his party, Umno.

Disparity in the treatment

Defeated BN candidate for Shah Alam in last May's general election Zulkifli Noordin has insulted Hinduism and Umno-owned Mingguan Malaysia columnist Ridhuan Tee Abdullah has derided the same religion, both in episodes that made the news in the last half year or so.

Zulkifli has apologised but Ridhuan has not expressed contrition.

Neither has been rapped across the knuckles by their superiors that would have caused a watching public to be reminded anew that Muslims are disinclined to disrespect the religious beliefs of non-Muslims.

perkasa charter interfaith council 260713 ibrahim aliMore incendiary than either Zulkifli's or Ridhuan's derisions of Hinduism were Perkasa chief Ibrahim Ali's (right) threat to burn Malay Bibles that carried the term 'Allah'.

All three departures from general Malay/Muslim decorum with respect to the religions of non-Muslims escaped censure by the authorities that have latterly gone after the blogging couple Alvivi and dog trainer Maznah Mohd Yusof, who was supposed to have uploaded an alleged insult to Islam on YouTube.

This disparity in the treatment accorded individual miscreants has understandably raised the hackles of non-Muslims who feel that their sensitivities can be slighted with impunity whereas violation of Muslim ones' merit swift and deterrent punishment.

Education Minister Muhyiddin's warnings over a perceived propensity among some non-Muslims to insult Muslims comes on the heels of his criticism of United Chinese Schools Committee's Association of Malaysia (Dong Zong) which has expressed opposition to the National Education Blueprint 2013-2015 his ministry formulated and is slated for introduction from next month.

Education is an issue that's rife with contention. Generally, people lack belief their children can obtain a good education in government schools. For that reason they place their kids in vernacular ones.

Attesting the inefficacy of government schooling is the fact that large numbers of graduates of this stream are unemployed. Parents queue up to get their children into vernacular schools, especially Chinese language ones.

Silent on 'shower room' canteen

The recent incident like the school in Sungai Buloh that required non-Muslim pupils to have their food during recess time near where its shower rooms are located only reinforces the mistrust with which government schooling is viewed, particularly by non-Malays.

The reduced intake this academic year of non-Malay students, many with standout results, into government universities only confirms the suspicion of non-Malays that the government presence in national education is inherently flawed.

Against this backdrop is it any wonder that the Dong Zong, the body mainly responsible for the preservation of a system of preparatory schooling that parents

clamor for their children to enter, is opposed to the blueprint?

Muhyiddin has painted Dong Zong's opposition as having to do with ethnocentrism and chauvinism when it is more nearly self-preservative and redolent of well-founded suspicion of government-inspired moves in education.

NONEThe education minister was conspicuously silent on the contretemps over the Sungai Buloh school. Had he been vocal in his displeasure at the impropriety of recess time arrangements for non-Muslim pupils during the month of Ramadan, his criticisms of Dong Zong's opposition would have carried moral heft.

All this begs the question of why after a period of relative quiet following the general election last May, the Umno No 2 who in the last four years has treaded a path of Malay rights assertion in the teeth of national conditions that called for an inclusive rather than exclusive vision, is once again tub-thumping on volatile issues.

Likely, he's shaping up for a run at the No 1 post after a brief period of doubt about the viability of the option - hence the quiet.

He seems to have shed that lull but with stances that pay little heed to the results of GE13 which, overall, were more encouraging to exponents of an inclusive than exclusive vision.

In sum, it would be better for the country to have Muhyiddin quiescent than questing.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd  
Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/237461>