

Did PKR really think through Kajang Move?

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COMMENT A 27-second video clip from the Disney movie Meet The Robinsons is great fun and worth watching.

In the clip, a tyrannosaurus rex chases a boy into the corner. As the boy is trapped, the dinosaur goes in for the kill, only to find that because of his physique, he cannot reach the little boy in the tight corner.

The mast of the tyrannosaurus' then calls him angrily, asking him why the boy has not been caught yet.

The poor tyrannosaurus explains, "I have a big head... and little arms. I'm just not sure... how well this plan was thought through."

I can't say how many times I've thought of this video throughout the Selangor menteri besar crisis.

I disagree with the motivations of Rafizi Ramli (right) and Anwar Ibrahim in wanting to get their hands into Selangor's coffers, but I can understand them.

What I am having trouble understanding is how such intelligent men can concoct such a bumbling, poorly thought-out plan - a plan that has clearly painted them into a corner from which there is no good exit.

In February this year, I wrote about the problems PKR and DAP will face if the Sultan of Selangor does not feel inclined to appoint Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail as Khalid Ibrahim's replacement.

My points were not and are not a normative comment on what the role of a constitutional monarch should be, but an analysis of political realities.

There are as many opinions as to how the Selangor constitution should be interpreted as there are lawyers and professors in the country. However, in general, the actual wording of the constitution, as it stands, appears to provide the ruler with considerable latitude on the choosing of a menteri besar.

Losing political points where it matters most

I have been saying, for some months now, that should PKR and DAP nevertheless decide to go head-to-head against the palace, the Barisan Nasional will crucify them for it, and milk every bit of the situation possible to its advantage.

It appears the crucifixions have begun. To Malay constituencies especially, PKR and DAP are (rightly or wrongly) being painted as arrogant politicians who have no respect whatsoever for Malay royal institutions. They are being pilloried for not following clear, simple instructions by the palace to submit more than two names for consideration.

Needless to say, BN is taking every opportunity to thus suggest that PKR and DAP are the enemy of everything Malay. Whether this is true or not, it makes for a sexy, compelling tale that we can be sure will be splashed across Utusan Malaysia and TV3, day after day.

One can only imagine how this will affect the rural constituencies that are Pakatan's biggest stumbling block, by far, to Putrajaya.

DAP appears to finally have had enough of this madness, and realised that it is not going to follow PKR to its political grave.

For reasons that suggest some lack of common sense and foresight in the first place, DAP followed Anwar right to the edge of the cliff, but apparently has had the good sense to slam on the brakes before actually falling off it.

Faux apologies?

Soon after, probably having being forced to adhere to the same logic, Anwar's own apology to the sultan followed.

However, the exact wordings of the apologies of both PKR and DAP have given rise to an old question: what exactly does an apology mean?

Imagine that someone has parked in your parking spot after you expressly told them not to. You confront the person as he exits his car, and he reacts by offering his profuse apologies, all the while standing there and making no move to park his car somewhere else.

So, what exactly is the value of that apology?

Neither PKR nor DAP have indicated any willingness to budge from their decision to only submit one name to the palace for consideration, thus prolonging the already drawn-out Selangor crisis.

DAP seems to be saying, "Anwar made us do it", and both statements cite 'convention'.

This seems an attempt to save face, and a rather weak one at that. We recall that the original letter sent by the palace to these parties also cites convention when it specified clearly that more than two names are to be submitted.

So, the palace has one version of 'convention', while PKR and DAP have another. Do PKR and DAP really think that they are going to somehow persuade the sultan as to their point

of view or pressure him to change his mind?

PKR seems to be living in blatant denial of the obvious endgame here. Either it backs down, or continues in open defiance. Empty apologies and hollow repetitions of a 'commitment to uphold the constitutional monarchy' will not protect PKR against the BN onslaught or expedite an end to this crisis, because, as always, actions speak louder than words.

Sept 16, Black 505, and now, Kajang Move...

An accomplished poker player once gave me a critique of what went wrong in a hand that I played. He said I was caught off guard because I wasn't prepared for the moves my opponent made, simply stating, "You obviously didn't have a plan."

Sometimes I wonder whether PKR ever has a plan, or a coherent strategy for that matter (though, it clearly is not lacking of strategists).

Either PKR does not, or it has bad ones that are predicated on gambling, rather than principles and facts.

The Sept 16 announce first, get numbers later approach ended in failure. The Black 505 rallies achieved nothing beyond sound and fury that soon faded, and now, the Kajang Move seems to have only achieved the one thing that hudud, BN or anything else has failed to do: split up Pakatan.

As the palace deadlock continues, PKR and DAP supporters continue to vent by taking thinly veiled potshots, which is eminently their right, but what do they achieve? Without a more comprehensive strategy, the proponents of the Kajang Move are left with little more than half-hearted measures that are neither here nor there, and bound to evaporate into inconsequence.

Big head, little arms

The endgame that is currently playing out is by far the most obvious one (one, it must be said, that would have been no different no matter when Khalid tendered his resignation). If the most casual political observer could have called it, surely a professional political strategist should have as well.

Instead, after awaking from their dreams that trying to force their way through, should all somehow end well, PKR seems to find itself completely unprepared, with too big a head, and too little arms to accomplish its task.

Having crossed the Rubicon weeks and months ago, now their only options are open defiance of the palace and the political suicide which follows, or looking ridiculous making the same kind of U-turn it has forced the Pakatan partners to.

In case of the DAP and PKR, they will face the inevitable question: if you didn't have a good

endgame, then why did you bother creating all this trouble while bringing Pakatan to the brink of disintegration in the first place?

As we hear that big head banging painfully against an unmoving wall, we really have to wonder: just how well was this plan thought through?

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