

Gov't instability at its peak; DO something

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The political scene of Malaysia and its final outcome is being followed closely by domestic and foreign political observers and pundits.

Never in the country's history has there been such intense polemics and uncertainty on the sustainability of the government.

The norm is after the government has been formed, it will move on with its responsibility of governing.

However, within the BN, there was surprise over how the party could reduce its majority and clamour for a post-mortem of the GE13 to know the reasons.

To outsiders it was obvious that the component parties on the whole particularly in Peninsular Malaysia did not have the acceptance of the Chinese and urban voters. Nothing unusual about that.

It is not only Umno that has to change but the component parties need to carry out some soul searching reforms of themselves.

Disbelief over poor performance

Coming out of this dismal performance there were some intelligent and some funny speculations and responses on what should be the next cause of action the leadership should take.

After all the BN had presented a very attractive manifesto promising all kinds of things if it got back to power.

Additionally BN spent a lot of money in the election campaign to regain the support of the voters particularly the Chinese but failed.

During the election campaign, Najib's advisors have also interestingly asked him to adopt the election strategy of a presidential election akin to that of United States president Barack Obama.

In their view Najib (photo) is more popular and acceptable than Umno or BN. In short they considered his aura and personality would carry the party to victory. Of course this did not happen.

Unfortunately while this worked in the Umno areas but it did not alter the Chinese and urban voters who already decided they wanted change.

Immediately after the election result, Najib publicly said that the Chinese voters had betrayed BN. This announcement did not go down well with the Chinese voters. This is now in the pages of history.

The MCA, with such dismal performance, decided to stay out of the government but came back later on the persuasion of Najib.

Najib stayed on despite poor performance

Thus, although the overall total seats obtained by BN was less than the votes or seats obtained in GE12, Najib decided to stay on as leader of the government and party.

Some political observers and pundits thought Najib should make way for his deputy to take over the helm of leadership in the party and government as was the case with his predecessor. Najib, of course, was said to be involved in cleverly manoeuvring his predecessor's exit.

However, Najib ensured this did not happen to him. He quickly rallied the support of the BN Members of Parliament including those from Sabah and Sarawak. For this political salvage, he rewarded well by appointing many of them into his cabinet.

It must be remembered prior to this he also made sure that all the MPs elected are his men and loyalists. In this way his leadership of the government was well secured.

The rationale for him not to pass the baton of leadership to his number two did not arise.

Furthermore with the support from the Sarawak and Sabah MP's Najib's could not be challenged.

Therefore, any voice of dissent or request for him to step down and make way for a new person to take over was totally silent.

Again this was another clever political maneuvering by Najib and his political advisors, notwithstanding the fact almost all his political aides who stood for election did not win their seats.

The clamour returns

Two years down the road of the GE the clamour for him to go came back to the front from within and outside the party. This time the voice is louder and stronger.

This was made worse by many unwise policy statements by his cabinet colleagues and the scandals affecting the government. This pressure comes also from his icon Dr Mahathir Mohamad and those close to him.

The social media was at the forefront of the strong criticisms, openly asking him to go. This time it was not merely on the scandals but also on his economic policies and personal lifestyle.

For the first time, his critics drag into the foray the conspicuous ostentatious lifestyle of his wife, his relationship with businessman Jho Low and the high debt position of 1Malaysia Development Bhd.

This was exacerbated by the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax and the inconsistencies of his and colleagues' explanation to the public.

This time around it could be seen he is just hanging by the tooth and nail. His own team made statements that are inconsistent with collective responsibility and as members of the PM's cabinet. There is a lot of political shadow boxing within the party and government.

On the other side, Dr Mahathir (photo) and his supporters have stepped up their campaign to remove him. Without being apologetic he openly goes around to demand for Najib to step down.

The groundswell is getting stronger and bigger. Whether Najib would be able to withstand this onslaught is for everyone to wait and see.

It has rattled him. Definitely, what is happening has caused what former deputy prime minister Musa Hitam to say that the country is imploding, making the political and the governmental position directionless.

Mahathir doesn't like losing

There seems to be a counter move against Mahathir and his former ministers like Daim Zainuddin and Zainudin Maidin. This made the spat between Mahathir and Najib to become more serious and vicious.

The public likes all these to end one way or another to move on with the daily life.

Mahathir never likes to lose a war. We are going to continue hearing his criticisms of Najib and demands for him to step down in favor of Muhyuddin.

This puts Muhyuddin (photo) on the spot, whether to remain loyal to Najib or take the cue from Mahathir to force his boss to go. This state of neither here nor there cannot go on for long.

Monday's Umno supreme council meeting seems to bring back calmness to the government and party.

The dust has settled on the ground. It is important that new controversies do not keep on surfacing.

Najib, Muhyuddin, party and government leaders must at least in public not be perceived to have differences, which could cause a loss in confidence and trust on the party and government.

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