

How much does it cost to hire a cybertrooper?

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COMMENT When then opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim 'hired' me to lead a team of 26 'cybertroopers' (the letters of the alphabet) about six years ago, he paid me a few million ringgit in the form of an 'IOU'.

I guess the jailed opposition leader has a great debt to pay to people who have served as his 'cybertroopers' which Anwar, when he comes to power, will be glad to repay, but he may find that all these 'I Owe You' claims have been automatically cancelled and replaced with the words: 'I Am With You'.

These were the words first coined by former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, which he used as his campaign slogan. However, his successor changed it to Satu Malaysia, which now appears to go against him.

Other cybertroopers

At around the same time that I started writing, Umno cybertroopers were talking about the 'Red Bean Army' (or RBA) which we know does not even exist, not to mention that DAP had allegedly spent millions of ringgit to hire these people.

Instead, what we have now is the commander of the 'Green Bean Army', in the form of fellow writer Mariam Mokhtar, who had also started writing at around the same time to express her frustrations with what she is seeing today.

I wonder if Mariam has even received her first million ringgit from an impoverished PAS (if green has anything to do with PAS, but more like she is talking about Islam than a political party), but what I know is that till today, Anwar has not paid me a single sen.

All we know is that he is in jail for a good cause, and most of us are gravely concerned over the miscarriage of justice in this country.

Likewise, when former PM Abdullah, who is better known as Pak Lah, 'asked' to hire my army of 26 soldiers against the onslaught of his predecessor Dr Mahathir Mohamad, he was not kind enough to even offer a single sen. Perhaps that is the reason why we failed in the battle.

Cybertroopers! Millions of ringgit! What Cybertron, in his (or her) article has revealed, is something that all of us know for a fact. Whenever I monitor the feedback to my articles, it is obvious that cybertroopers come like a swarm of locusts whenever Najib's name or 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) is mentioned.

They leave behind comments often distastefully done in some incomprehensible English,

and they leave. I wonder how much these people are paid from Umno's coffers - or is it from our taxpayers' hard-earned money?

Only one or two appear to have a little more grey matter - they try to create doubts. They write in good English. We know that they also masquerade as frustrated pro-Pakatan supporters when they write their comments.

Compared to the other cybertroopers, these 'seniors' should be asking for many times more than what they are being paid now. If Najib has anything to do with this, he should do a good 'jasa' (deed) for these senior cybertroopers by giving them what they are asking.

Nothing short of a million ringgit per annum would be the minimum, given that they are waging warfare to defend a project that is worth billions of Ringgit. Being paid RM200,000 per annum is like a drop of water in the big ocean. What is so glamorous about being a cybertrooper after all?

The commander himself should be earning at least RM2 million per annum. This is, after all, the kind of money paid to some former civil servants who are helming our government-linked corporations.

A good reminder from the cybertroopers which can be copied and pasted as a letter to their paymaster is this: "Remember if you do not pay your cybertroopers well, it may cost you your job and you may have to end up filling the cell that Anwar leaves vacant five years from now."

Anwar is the inspiration

Jokes aside, Anwar never knew me in person. Even if he did, it was through the occasional email that I sent to him, to which he replied with a one-line answer.

He would probably have remembered me by my name, like so many of you who eventually meet me and tell me that you have been reading my articles.

Certainly, he has not paid me anything, but it does not stop me from writing what I see and telling it from the heart.

That is the big difference, because I am inspired by the one man who has stood up against injustice in this country and willing to fight all the way to see the emergence of a new Malaysia.

He has been tried and tested, experienced the salt and gone through fiery trials. That's the big difference that Anwar is today from those days when he was a powerful YoungTurk within the ruling party.

When I write, my main objective is to help stop the rot in this nation, like salt to the rotting meat. When I first switched my attention from Pak Lah to Anwar Ibrahim, it was when he

was under severe attacks from Umno politicians.

Anwar (photo) was accused of sodomy. Anwar was portrayed as the man behind the sex with a China doll episode. Anwar was allegedly a spy for the Russians, then the Jews, and I guess also an American spy of some sort. But the real Anwar stood strong and won the popularity vote in the last general election.

But this has given Umno a very bad name. Now, it is even worse post-Sodomy II, and while he is in jail, we have the 1MDB fiasco and the Big Question Mark about the murder of Altantuya Shariibuu!

With the jailing of Anwar, it has once again put corrupted and power-crazy Umno in a bad light, not only in the eyes of my fellow Malaysians but the international community. This is why Najib has been getting all the brickbats from people like me, who have nothing to do with 1MDB.

On one hand, Najib projects himself as a moderate Muslim leader; on the other hand, he has persecuted a fellow Muslim, who is also the country's most prominent opposition leader.

It simply does not make any sense at all. Despite the High Court having acquitted him, Najib's administration appeared adamant to push the case all the way to the Supreme Court.

What inspires me to write these days is Anwar himself. Whenever I think of him, I feel the boost of energy welling within me and the frustrations with what I see in today's politics.

This is the difference between me and the cybertroopers that are paid to do the job. They do not have even a good command of the language, whereas I have been writing since I was only 10 years old.

The cybertroopers do not have the passion that I, or many other writers like Mariam Mokhtar, have as writers. We are simple people. It was only through emails that I learnt that Mariam is living in a kampung, and she learnt I am only driving a 22-year-old jalopy!

Because Anwar is in prison, we are driven by passion. We are driven by our little sense of justice. We are willing to work through the night just to send our troopers to the warzone.

Although our army is only 26-soldier strong, they are willing to align themselves into any form or position just for sake of wanting to see a better Malaysia. We are saddened by the news each day as we read of how much money has gone missing from our national coffers to the point that we are asking, "Is there anything left for the future generation of Malaysians?"

I am not sure if the BN cybertroopers are 'nine-to-five' employees, and if they are, I am sure they will never be able to beat the 26 letters of the alphabet that are at our command.

Perhaps, they should look for a jailed leader to work for instead, and only then, they will understand what motivates a lot of us other than the Ringgit and sen.

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