

A broken prime minister
MalaysiaKini.com
July 8, 2015
By RK Anand

COMMENT I can't remember her name, but something she did on the first day of class left an everlasting impression. Till today, I cannot fathom what prompted her to impart such a profound lesson on a roomful of boisterous eight-year-old kids.

She drew a black circle in the middle of a large white paper and asked us what we saw. In our eagerness to impress the new teacher, we immediately cried in unison: "Black dot."

All except for one that is. The bespectacled goody two shoes Julian, who with a smug countenance, chimed: "I see a black circle, it is not a dot".

As some of us whispered in the corner, hatching a plot to beat up Julian during recess. The teacher then posed the most unexpected question: "How come none of you noticed the white paper?"

We were speechless, for as much as we tried, our brains that had hardly functioned for a decade could not comprehend the complexity of the issue at hand.

Even Julian appeared flustered, disappointed for squandering an opportunity to become the teacher's pet.

Unbeknownst to us, it was our first encounter with the power of perception.

Likewise, politics is all about perception. The perennial tussle between the black dot-circle and white paper. It can make or break a politician.

Suffering a fate similar to Humpty Dumpty

And now in Putrajaya dwells a man who is broken. Suffering a fate similar to that of Humpty-Dumpty, for not all the Paul Stadlens and Lim Kok Wings can put him together again.

Already drowning in a sea of allegations, the latest tidal wave from The Wall Street Journal has sent him reeling.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has been accused of siphoning RM2.6 billion of 1MDB funds and this has put his reputation in the Intensive Care Unit, if not the morgue.

Over the years, the accusations have covered land, air and sea. From a murdered Mongolian woman, private jets, submarines that initially refused to submerge, expensive watches and handbags to precious ornaments. It is a long list indeed.

In the prime minister's case, there is very little of the white paper visible, despite his repeated denials.

If the art of shaping perception can be equated to a game of chess, then former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad is a grandmaster.

Despite the opposition harping on the 1MDB issue for months, it was Mahathir who turned it into a national issue, ensuring that it reaches the ears of those in rural areas as well, instead of being the topic of urbanite discussions.

Apart from being the former prime minister - with his criticisms having more prominence and traction - the political wizard also deliberately kept his salvos simple but acerbic.

Several speculations spawned

Unlike the difficult to ingest calculations cited by the opposition, Mahathir used unsophisticated arithmetic and terms like "duit hilang", which resonated with Malaysians from all walks of life, even among those who had no clue how many zeroes there are in one billion.

As for the latest allegation, it has spawned several speculations.

One of them being tycoons of a particular race not being as charitable to the ruling coalition in the last general election as before, forcing a desperate Najib to seek election funds elsewhere and in the haste, caring not about the obvious money trail.

It is also claimed that since Umno candidates received a portion for their own election expenses, they are forced to zip their lips and stand behind the president in this time of crisis.

But what if Najib is innocent, and this entire episode had been masterminded by Mahathir due to personal grudges?

Would it make a difference to his reputation if the special taskforce clears the prime minister?

Unlikely. This is because the agencies tasked with investigating the matter themselves suffer from a perception crisis and if the probe finds the prime minister innocent, cries of a cover-up would ring out.

Should Najib insist on remaining at the helm, then the true test of perception would take place in the next general election.

As for now, it appears that the RAHMAN prophecy is poised to come true, unless Najib is able to find a Men in Black standard issue device, the Neuralizer.

For those who have not watched the movie, it is a device that emanates a bright flash which erases the memories of the past hours, days, weeks, months or years.

'There are things known and there are things unknown, and in between are the doors of perception' - Aldous Huxley.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/304406>