

## Why gov't is afraid of Sarawak Report

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**COMMENT** I awoke to a cold winter morning in Melbourne matched only by the black notice before my eyes. I stared at the top story in *Malaysiakini* which coldly stated: "NOTIFICATION - This website is not available in Malaysia as it violates the National Law".

The *Sarawak Report* is officially banned in Malaysia.

That figures. News, as I learned from my journalism course, is something that someone somewhere does not want known. "Is this an unwitting admission of guilt?" some of the many comments in *Malaysiakini* suggested. After all, *Sarawak Report* was pivotal in exposing the 1MDB scandal.

Does the *Sarawak Report* publish information that someone in Malaysia does not want known?

Should the government not take other more democratic actions than use the jackboots approach? Does it not trust its legal system? After all, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has sued *Malaysiakini*, so why not sue the *Sarawak Report*?

What 'National Law' has the *Sarawak Report* violated?

Indeed, these days there are more questions than answers.

The night before I had read [a letter](#) in *Malaysiakini*, supposedly written by a British expatriate near the end of his professional stint in Malaysia speaking plainly about the impending doom in the country and giving his candid critique.

I doubt the author's authenticity though the letter's contents, critical of Malaysians in general, are what Malaysians already know and speak of among themselves.

In a veiled justification of the government, almost in a sleight of hand manner that made me suspicious of the author's authenticity, the contents turned the spotlight on Malaysians and perhaps with reason because what makes a nation is not only the government but the people, even if one is critical of its governance.

The people are responsible for the government they vote into power despite all that gerrymandering and malapportionment which can be double-edged swords. If people want good governance they must not only vote for good governance but work for good governance and keep their politicians honest and accountable.

If we keep an open mind, much of what happens in Malaysia is because the people have failed themselves and 'British Expat' makes the point. But the fact so many can run amok in the Low Yat fracas is indicative of one crucial fact: political conspiracy and racial instigation. Malaysians, except the 'rent-a-crowd mobs', do not harm one another over an alleged mobile phone scam.

Every time such a 'racial' incident occurs, the facts must be known because even in medicine if you don't have access to the facts how can even the best doctor diagnose the sickness and prescribe treatment? Is that not why the assaults on journalists tell me someone is afraid of the truth? The police must tell the public if the criminal acts were 'organised' as one May 13 book alleged.

### **Truth incriminates**

It just might be electoral disaster for the corrupt if more people know the truth. The truth has always been the enemy of corrupt politicians, criminals and lawbreakers. So threats and bans are the favoured modus operandi if you have something to hide, to fear because you have done wrong.

The robber threatens, "Don't report". The rapist warns, "Don't scream" or "Don't tell anyone". The corrupt politician hides crucial information. They are all afraid of people knowing the truth.

After all, the truth will incriminate.

Every nation has its national flaws and it would be foolish to rationalise away bad governance because of the bad social habits of its people. The deflection of criticism from the government to the people by letter writer 'British Expat' seemed intentional.

And expectedly some Malaysians [retaliated](#) against the suspicious 'gwei loh' in a tit-for-tat rebuttal, citing anecdotes of British idiosyncrasies and national social flaws and the dark side of the 'poms'. I could have added more having lived with the British locals and worked there for some time. But what is the point?

Only last night I watched a '[60 Minutes](#)' expose of how dark British society can be. It exposed a pedophiles ring organised by some top politicians, including members of the House of Lords and a former minister in the Margaret Thatcher cabinet. It seems some of the culpable are still sitting in the august house.

The lusty lords supplied one another with young boys and girls from state homes and two of the interviewed victims, a man and a woman, stand steadfast behind their allegations. The unimaginable cruelty of the man's sexual violation when he was a boy etched indelibly on his troubled face and tormented soul. The British police believe there is sufficient evidence for prosecution and criticised earlier cover-ups.

Those unconscionable men in Her Majesty's government, one claiming to be suffering from dementia, are in hot soup and will be boiled by the British public. The pedophiles have the chutzpah to pressure their government to lower the age of consent so they can have sex with very young children. It is disgusting to repeat the demented ideas of these great brutes in a country many of us have a fondness for.

Imagine if the British government had banned the expose because it places parliamentarians and their nation in bad light? How will anyone know what happens when powerful politicians connive to carry out dark deeds and abuse their powers to cover up their evil acts? What other criminal acts are they hiding from the ignorant public?

But according to 60 Minutes, a new generation of British politicians is baying for justice and determined to purge their hallowed halls of such 'scums of the earth'. When dark deeds are placed in the public spotlight, criminals in politics will be exposed and punished. 'No one is above the law' is not lip-service when we see the guilty go to jail.

### **Banning media futile**

No British or American leader has banned the media despite their most intimate secrets being exposed and they are shamed. Why must it happen in Malaysia, this banning business? Why is 'nation's image abroad' only tarnished by exposes but not the bans?

It is a great nation that openly deals with wrongdoings in high places and makes even its highest public official, even a leader, accountable. I admire the British for their innate ability to expose their culpable politicians and purge their politics of scumbags and scoundrels. Not long ago it was the allowances scandals among British parliamentarians.

Did the Queen order a media blackout on what went on within the royal family during the painful days of her son's failed marriage and the aftermath of Princess Diana's death and allegations of conspiracy?

For this reason, the media must never be banned and vital information, especially of exposes, kept from the public. It is downright dishonest to cite national interests and officials secrets to shield the private secrets of the allegedly crooked politicians.

The media is society's only hope of knowing the truth. They are a country's means of receiving crucial information, and local and foreign news. In the age of social media, the banning of *The Sarawak Report* is a futile act by a government that may now be accused of guilt by censorship.

It is not fair to those who are innocent and may be tarnished by suspicion. The 1MDB scandal is best judged in the open, in the courts, in the social media and in the face of indisputable facts. If the facts are tangled, the knots can be untangled. Otherwise what is the use of having courts and a judiciary and even all sorts of inquiries?

The Arabs sick of skewed news from American news networks created Al Jazeera. They did not ban CNN or BBC. They matched bias with their own news and even the Chinese have got in the act. Malaysia controls its news through government networks, but we read *Malaysiakini* and other websites for independent news to get a more balanced diet.

What is the use of intelligence and education and becoming a developed nation when the government plays nanny to what we can read and watch? How developed is that? Worse than having to accept the deprivation of a useful news source is the lie people are forced to swallow that it is for the public good.

If any website has broken any of the laws of Malaysia, they ought to be charged for the specific crime. The nature of democracy insists the courts be the final judge of what is criminal or not, not the politicians or the police or any regulator. It is not the job of executor and enforcer to also play judge.

So why is the government really afraid of *Sarawak Report*?

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