

Is Najib the victor or a dead man walking?

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COMMENT So far, if we go by the mainstream and official media reports, it appears as if Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak is the big victor in the 1MDB and personal donation double scandals.

But is this such a certainty? Have the Umno rebels and the Umno revolt been crushed? Has Najib been cleared of his alleged political sins and crime, just because the attorney-general (AG) has declared that there will be no charges against the PM and that the RM2.6 billion political donation and RM42 million from SRC International transferred into Najib's personal bank accounts cases are closed?

Has his nemesis, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, met his Waterloo? Will Najib be leading Umno and BN to another five more years of rule after the next election?

These views of a Najib victory and the defeat of Pakatan and the Umno dissidents led by Mahathir and Muhyiddin Yassin have been strengthened by the recent Sarawak election results and the success of BN in the two recent by-elections. The disarray within Pakatan Harapan and failure of the Citizens' Declaration to ignite a grassroots fire targeting the prime minister have also led to much crowing from the pro-Najib camp.

Umno's 'dedak' (animal feed) eaters and prepaid bloggers, including a prominent ex-opposition born-again Umno supporter and racial chauvinist writing all the way from Manchester, have been more than boastful. They have been writing night and day about how Najib has triumphed; they have praised him sky high for his political skills and acumen; they have screaming headlines in their blog sites, such as 'It wasn't bullshit. Najib has been telling us the truth all along'.

There are two main reasons why I disagree with their assessment.

I believe (and there are many analysts out there who feel exactly the same way, except that, unlike me, they are afraid, unwilling or unable to publish their opinions openly)

Najib is living on borrowed time. Together with his wife Rosmah Mansor, as well as the alleged masterminds and those benefiting from the 1MDB fiasco, we can be sure that they still cannot sleep well at night; and are also probably having nightmares of going to jail.

Investigations continuing in Singapore, Switzerland and US

The first reason is that although the investigations into 1MDB and the donation have come to a standstill in Malaysia, they are continuing in Singapore, Switzerland and the US. These investigations cannot be aborted the way they have been in Malaysia.

Everyone connected to the Internet now knows that Abdul Gani Patail, the then AG who arrived at his office to finalise the corruption charges against the prime minister resulting from the investigations of the multi-agency task force into 1MDB, was unceremoniously sacked.

According to an informant to the *Sarawak Report*: “He was finalising it. He went to his office and found he could not go in. Ali Hamsa, the chief secretary to the government, was waiting and he told him [the attorney-general, Abdul Gani Patail] that he was dismissed. He could not even get his papers.”

Furthermore, *Sarawak Report* noted that “within hours of this secret drama at the heart of government, as all Malaysia knows, the prime minister had moved to effect what has been described as an attempted coup d’etat”.

“The head of Special Branch was removed, the deputy prime minister was dumped and four members of the investigating Public Accounts Committee were elevated without choice to positions in cabinet and its work was declared suspended. Other known cabinet critics of the 1MDB scandal have also been unceremoniously dismissed by the prime minister.”

Najib may have got rid of his cabinet and Umno critics, but the celebration by his cronies and supporters is premature.

As the saying goes, “The empire has struck back”. This is the second reason why, apart from the ongoing foreign investigations and new foreign bombs likely to explode when least expected, Najib may be a dead man walking as a result of the latest local bomb.

The empire strikes back

The Malaysian bomb is a result of his Umno critics under Dr Mahathir's leadership setting up a new party.

To me the most important political development in the last few months are the events leading to the statement by sacked Umno deputy president Muhyiddin calling attention to the emergence of a new party and a proposed truce among opposition parties so that they can work together to prepare for the next general election.

In his statement, Muhyiddin said: "I agree with Mahathir's suggestion to set up a new political party that will cooperate with all quarters, including Pakatan Harapan, PAS and civil society, to continue the struggle to save Malaysia, while taking necessary steps to enact institutional reforms."

Muhyiddin appears to be now echoing the proposal by PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim, PAS deputy president Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man and PKR deputy president Azmin Mohamed Ali, for Harapan and PAS as well as others, to come back to the negotiation table to form an opposition front for the coming general election.

According to him, "This pact is extremely important to give the people confidence that other parties, besides BN, can lead Malaysia better and take care of the people's needs."

The proposed grand coalition may appear to be the chance for the opposition to get rid of Prime Minister Najib.

But to me, it is important to point out that it is our last hope for institutional reform and the last chance for us to achieve our goal of a developed nation, which under BN rule has become an impossible dream.