

Was Anwar behind Apco's hiring?
Malaysiakini.com
April 10, 2010
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Despite strongly objecting to Apco Worldwide's presence in Malaysia, Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim may be the very reason why the firm was sought for its services in the first place.

And regardless of all the anti-Israeli rhetoric and conspiracy theories bandied about, the answer as to why Apco was chosen out of the hundreds of the firms available could be even simpler.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak was desperate.

Consider, for example, US president Barak Obama's public relations success and the uncanny similarities of his campaign to qualities that Anwar possess.

Obama's charisma, his worldwide international friendships, his close contacts with people in high places overseas, and his ubiquitous Internet presence were all maximised to the hilt - and closely mirror the PR campaign of the Malaysian opposition leader.

Obama and budget for Iraq and Afghanistan 100409 02 And just as Obama triumphed to become the first African-American to become the president of the US, Anwar's Pakatan Rakyat coalition swept up four states and held onto a fifth as it broke the BN's decades'-long two-thirds' hold on Parliament

Najib's advisors probably realised that their boss lacked Anwar's stature domestically and across the seas and foreign borders.

International connectivity, they undoubtedly knew, can dramatically influence the rise - and fall - of national leaders.

For Najib, despite his years in the Cabinet, does not actually have 'that X factor'.

NONE He does not have former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamed's maverick persona, nor can he shrug off foreign criticism as Mahathir often did during his 22-years as premier - with his cynical smile and caustic wit.

Neither does our Prime Minister have Anwar's charm and his personal relationships with foreign dignitaries.

Note Anwar's overseas trips to drum up support for his domestic problems.

Foreign mercenaries

Najib did not hobnob with youth leaders who are now in positions of power, nor is he regarded as highly for his stance on global politics and Islamic matters.

As American industrialist Henry Ford put it, what qualities leader does not have, he should hire people who do.

So the next thing we know, foreign 'mercenaries' arrive at our shores.

What Najib needs is what Apco provides - a direct hotline to the foreign press, politicians and public. Apco's other 'strategic communications' services came as an added bonus.

Anwar probably knew all too well that he is the reason behind Apco's engagement.

anwar ibrahim drums support from london 210310 01Anwar's frequent trips have led to the Al Gore 'reformasi' state dinner caper, the early day motion by MP Jeremy Corbyn (left) in the UK parliament and the 'attempted intervention' by 50 Australian parliamentarians in his trial.

It is a sore point with Najib and Anwar is exploiting it to the fullest for political mileage. Indeed his protestations over Apco may be seen as laying it on too thickly.

Despite accusing Najib of blatantly allowing foreign intervention in our internal affairs, Anwar himself shows no such compunction when he did the same in his frequent overseas 'junkets'.

syed husin ali interview 160307 assuredPKR deputy president Syed Hussin Ali (right) said it most eloquently after a briefing for foreign diplomats conducted by the party's political bureau.

"It is our right to engage with our friends in the diplomatic community," Hussin told reporters afterwards.

If they claim to have that right, then Najib must also be accorded that very same right.

Questionable as it is, Najib's allegedly Apco-assisted Washington forum is no different from Anwar's 'briefing' of foreign diplomats.

An ogre's choice

So it's a tit for tat.

Anwar may lament his lack of stature in and access to the local press, but that should not excuse his attempts to cut off Najib from accessing a foreign audience.

Unless, that is, Anwar is claiming the very same dictatorial position which Najib is deemed by many to be snugly ensconced in.

NONEAnwar's sudden revelations of Israeli infiltration seems like a convenient excuse to attack Apco.

If he is truly serious, than he should know all too well that there are other Israeli-linked companies operating in various capacities in Malaysia.

Should we burn our bridges with them, too?

The Apco scandal is a Catch-22 situation for Najib, an ogre's choice that damns him if he continues their services, and damns him if he doesn't.

If he does, then this accompanying issues will be an open wound that Anwar & Co. will continue to pounce on again and again in a savage flailing of Najib's public reputation.

If he doesn't, then he stands to lose the one advantage he has which can blunt Anwar's national and international reputation.

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