

**MCA bid to 'steal the thunder' futile**  
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COMMENT Umno, MCA and MIC are at the moment like three punch drunk men. They are holding on to each other as usual after a hard drinking session. They walk along a dark and lonely road in the dead of a bitterly cold and windswept night. It's only a matter of time before all three fall into the nearest mosquito-infested ditch and drown there in the stagnant 8cm of murky water.

NONE Yet MCA's Dr Chua Soi Lek (right) would have us all believe, judging from his recent moves, that he can steal the thunder from the Democratic Action Party (DAP) and dictate the political agenda between Umno and themselves.

Umno plays along; invoking visions of May 13 to play to the gallery, as if we need reminding now and then, like little children, to cow us into submission.

Behind the play-acting in public, the 'friendly adversaries' roar with laughter in private and take a dig at each other's performance. Chua himself might have been a star performer in the past and has drawn much public attention for his acting prowess, but he's not going to get any rave reviews this time.

If Chua thinks that the Chinese will get thoroughly confused and come back in droves to the MCA for "putting Umno in its place", he is sadly mistaken. Nothing has changed, as the Chinese with eyes can see for themselves.

Those with ears can hear but there's nothing pleasant out there to interest them. Ibrahim Ali and his nauseating goons in Perkasa make them want to throw up all the time.

Trotting out a list of demands is not only a no-brainer; it's a deadender with a recalcitrant party like Umno. This is a party with an extreme denial syndrome, given to cosmetics and hype. Only repeated clobbering at the ballot box will bring it to its senses, if at all.

Getting into polemics with Umno and Perkasa, its evil twin, will not make any difference for the better either. It will not suddenly make the MCA relevant in the national political theatre. It will merely hasten its departure without fanfare from the body politic and, without so much as even a footnote, into the dustbin of history. The ensuing silence will be deafening since no one will miss the MCA or the MIC, its equally sinful twin, for that matter.

MCA should walk alone

If the MCA is really interested in the future of the nation in general and the welfare of the Chinese community in particular, it must for starters, get out of the ruling coalition six months before the next general election. It can continue to stay in government in a 'caretaker' capacity until after the polls are over.

This will enable it to test its fortunes for all its worth, in as many parliamentary and state seats as possible, under its own symbol. This will be particularly true if it opens its doors to all. The 'Malaysian' in MCA should suffice to cover the non-Chinese.

barisan nasional That doesn't mean it can't forge an electoral pact with its former coalition partners to take on the opposition parties one-on-one.

The MCA can re-negotiate with its Barisan Nasional (BN) partners after the polls to form a new coalition government. The process of bargaining will be hard but it will be worthwhile for itself, the community and the nation. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. No mutually beneficial agreement, no coalition.

The present BN arrangement circumscribes the democratic process by tacitly endorsing elite so-called power-sharing and denies the grassroots majority meaningful participation in the electoral process. It's not necessary for the parties in the BN to be in a coalition before the elections. The coalition should come after the polls, if they win, and only to be disbanded again before the polls.

barisan rakyat pas pkr dap This does not mean that the opposition alliance, the Pakatan Rakyat, should likewise eschew a pre-poll coalition. In their case, they are not in power yet in Putrajaya. So, it makes sense for them to forge an electoral pact within their coalition and take on the ruling coalition one-on-one under one common symbol.

The re-ordering of the national politics, across both sides of the political divide, will bring rich dividends in every sphere of activity and all aspects of national life. It will unleash the pent-up creative energies of the nation and usher in a golden age marked by genuine partnerships and real nation-building.

An old kind of politics, of the stale kind, now dictates too much of our lives and continues to stunt our potential as a people and a nation. The belief in sacred cows must end.

No sacred cows

There are no sacred cows except those forged by consensus-and-compromise in a mutual agreement which will follow the hard bargaining and horse-trading that can be expected after every election.

Patently, there's a need for a new kind of politics to govern the nation. It will be easier this time around as every community in this country is equally divided and equally united. The old ways no longer work. Yet Umno continues to flog the dead horse of Malay unity with a nostalgic eye on the past. It's time to let go but they can't probably because they harbour a death-wish.

Like the German Nazi dictator, Adolf Hitler, they either get what they want - no matter how unreasonable to the rest of the world - or they die trying and kill their people in the process. This will be a sad commentary on a party which doesn't know when to let go and walk away with what little dignity it has intact.

The next outing, come 2013, will be the dirtiest, most brutal war ever waged in the history of polls in the country.

Sabah and Sarawak will no longer remain electoral fixed deposits for Umno.

azlan In peninsular Malaysia, Pakatan is going after two other electoral fixed deposits of Umno i.e. Felda and Felcra. Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) has opened the Pandora's Box in Felda. Things will never be the same again. PAS, the Islamic party, has opened a can of worms in Felcra. The assaults will continue unabated and it will be a grievously wounded Umno that will face the 2013 polls. It won't have time to lick its wounds and recover.

This is a historical opportunity for MCA and the other components in BN to get their politics

and relationships in order and play their cards right. Principles and priorities must come first before drawing up any list and making demands on others.

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