



**MCA launches troops into cyberspace**  
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MCA's virtual propaganda machine is running "better than before", as the party ramps up its online presence to counter the bad rap it has received from the opposition over the years.

Party president Dr Chua Soi Lek (*right*) said they are doing well in going "on the offensive", a change from a more defensive position taken in the past.

"When it comes to publicity, MCA adopted a very low profile method. We liked to be attacked, we liked to defend ourselves. We want to be on the offensive... there are more who are active now, but we can be much better," he said in an interview with selected media today.

Chua, who had said he was setting up a team of 'cybertroopers' when he took over the presidency earlier this year, admitted that they only managed to recruit half of their targeted 400 troops but is pleased with their progress.

He however declined to reveal the person appointed to coordinate the party's online assault, and also shied away from calling the 'cybertroopers' as volunteers.

"I wouldn't say they are all volunteers, because they are involved in using facilities. We have to help them in electricity, that sort of thing.

"Nothing is free in this world. Volunteerism does not mean we work every day for free. We help the division and by empowering a division means giving adequate resources to the division," he said in denying claims that some troopers are paid for their services.



The party's formal recognition of 'cybertroopers' is seen as part of Chua's efforts to reinvigorate the party and generate renewed support from the Chinese community in preparation for the next general elections.

Chua stressed that between the time of the watershed March 2008 general elections, when MCA suffered a near complete whitewash, and the end of the party's leadership crisis with his victory in the party polls in March this year, the party has suffered a period of

"benign neglect".

Unification in progress

He said he does not blame the Chinese community for losing faith in the party as not much was done over that period, and acknowledged that the first step to regaining their support is to unify the party.

"I think I have achieved to a certain degree consolidated support at national and state levels. Of course at divisional level there are still warlords but no political party in Malaysia can claim to be 100 percent in order.

"The party leadership and the members agree that our priority now is unity... in the past one and a half years we faced a party crisis and not much was done, and we got publicity for all the wrong reasons.

"Until and unless MCA can unite, we cannot expect to gain support from the community. How can we ask people to support us when we can't even get it from our own members? There is no logic in that," he said.

Chua however says he is not bothered by the short tenure he has left as party president, which expires next year, stressing that reviving MCA's political fortunes far outweighs the ambitions of individual leaders.

"If everyone loves the party, then there is no problem to contest for positions as long as it does not destroy the party.

"Party elections are of no use if MCA loses more seats in the next general elections... if that happens, party positions would actually become a burden," he said.

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