

MCA still less equal than Umno  
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Last weekend, Chua Soi Lek said he was honored by the fact that Wisma MCA – though less grandiose than the Umno's Putra World Trade Centre - had been chosen as the venue for the much hyped-up BN convention.

bn convension 20101205 leaders 02It would seem that the MCA president is a man of humble tastes easily pleased with tokens of appreciation.

And the hosting of the event created an illusion in Chua that the MCA is now an equal partner in the ruling coalition.

I'm sorry to be blunt, but more than five decades of partnership with Umno has only produced an emasculated MCA. Who in his or her right mind would buy the fallacy that the Chinese party is now as powerful as never before?

In other words, if the MCA – and any other BN component party, for that matter, except Abdul Taib Mahmud's PBB in Sarawak – had failed to exert itself as a rightful and effective member of government in its heyday, why should the public believe the party is now significantly more influential given its position of weakness, having been reduced to a paltry representation of 15 lawmakers in Parliament?

bn convension 20101205 crowd 03Like it or not, Umno leaders are indeed entitled to stake the first claim to government with its 78 MPs.

One must also not forget that in most of the federal states – including Penang where the MCA and Gerakan were totally wiped out – Umno's presence in the state assembly remains formidable.

Furthermore, of the 15 parliamentary constituencies won by the MCA, more than half of them are Malay-majority areas, meaning that the MCA incumbents in these seats would be in deep water should Umno deem it fit to withdraw its support.

MCA void of legitimacy

I detest race politics, yet I feel we must respect those who have chosen to vote for race-based parties over the years.

Still, there is now a serious void of legitimacy as far as the MCA is concerned.

Things would be slightly easier if Malaysia had a fairer electoral system.

dap race relations forums 300706 sit down crowdIn fact, had the country conducted the 2008 General Elections based on proportional representation, the MCA would have secured some 23 parliamentary seats given its 10.35% share of the popular vote. Winning in its own right, the party would also have gone back to the negotiation table with its head held high, especially when Umno's 29.33 percent of popular support would translate into 65 seats, 13 less than is the case now.

It must be cautioned here that all this is merely a crude projection, and that the political scenario would change drastically if there were a different election system.

The point is that the MCA and those who feel increasingly squeezed by a ubiquitous and arrogant Umno must be bold enough to think out of the box and demand for electoral reform.

mca agm 101010 najib speech 02Their abject failure to do this is only indicative of their dependency on political and economic largesse from Umno.

Why do you think Chua is appointed chairman of the Penang Port Commission despite his utter lack of experience in this area?

The BN Convention has come and gone, leaving the delegates quibbling over who is a junior partner and who is not, and what constitutes sensitive phrases and what does not.

More equal than others

But if the MCA, the MIC and Gerakan were truly equal in the coalition, why on earth has the Malaysian public witnessed the officiating of their respective annual general assembly by Najib Abdul Razak, the Umno president?

Would Chua, Koh Tsu Koon or G Palanivel have the guts to ask for an opportunity to deliver a keynote speech at next year's Umno party congress? I doubt any of them would do so.

For decades, the international media has dubbed Umno's supreme council as being the real policy-making body, rather than the window-dressing cabinet that it is.

Any attempt to upset this 'consensus' will surely be met with ferocious resistance and even demonisation - with the help of the Umno-controlled machinery.

bn convention 051210 chua soi lek pc 3We all know Chua's records, if not those of others, are not squeaky clean.

The Duke of Wellington once said 'being born in the stable does not make one a horse'.

I may be accused of rubbing salt into the wounds of the Irish - as their country is going through the severest financial turmoil in decades - with this famous quote. But really I only intend to paraphrase it to illustrate the false hope and confidence of the MCA.

What about 'having kindly offered one's humble abode for a sumptuous feast does not make one the master'?

JOSH HONG studied politics at London Metropolitan University and the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. A keen watcher of domestic and international politics, he longs for a day when Malaysians will learn and master the art of self-mockery, and enjoy life to the full in spite of politicians.

