

A new Merdeka?
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'The Japan that Can Say No' was a book co-written by Sony chairman Akio Morita and politician Shintaro Ishihara during Japan's rise as an economic power-house in 1989. MCPX

As a sequel many years later he and Dr Mahathir Mohamed co-wrote a book called, 'The Asia that Can Say No!' Of course, they were talking about saying 'No' to the US and its Western allies and their agenda in Asia.

polling day 080308 voters queue
On Saturday, Malaysians whom I call 'Rakyat Bangsa Malaysia' also said a clear and clean NO to corruption, cronyism, the lack of transparency and accountability. The Barisan Rakyat, as it was called, swept Barisan Nasional (BN) out of a two-thirds majority in Parliament with a 140-82 score.

What did the people really say? Is it that we were against BN per se or its politics of multi-ethnicity? Was it that we could not agree with selected BN candidates whether Malay, Chinese or Indian? Or, was the real message something else?

The real message was: 'We the people decide on our government; not the mainstream media, not cronies who get contracts and not the corrupt either.'

I believe that it was a vote against the arrogance of the BN, the false promises, the many lies told and the lack of true, honest and sincere accountability to the people; for that is what democracy is all about. And worst of all was the government's assumption that 'we the people' could not see through the smokescreen!

Malaysia will never be the same again. A good friend from Penang even called this a new Merdeka - I agree; maybe it is the real Merdeka!

tony pua cast ballot 080308 crowd
We all voted for a Barisan Rakyat; not per se for PAS, Keadilan or even DAP. I sincerely hope that these three parties do not forget this fact either.

In fact, another friend of mine wrote: "It was a great victory for the people. Now the elected reps have to stand up and deliver. Top on my list is something simple - transparency, accountability, humility, justice for all, and righteousness!"

It was really a protest vote against Umno's arrogance and BN's inability to listen to the voice of the people. I hope Pak Lah, who claims to have big ears can now learn to listen to the voice of the people as reflected in the positions taken by Bersih, or Hindraf or even Article 11.

Rooting out corruption

Every Malaysian who voted for the Barisan Rakyat and as Anak Bangsa Malaysia have made one thing clear: we will work together against corruption in any form and cronyism in all forms.

My unsolicited advice to all new state governments is to revert to rule of law - you cannot go wrong and the law will always be on your side. The Constitution is supreme and the rule of law is our Rukunegara or our guide.

umno bn leaders election meeting 140208 samy velluThe biblical story of David and Goliath was repeated in many constituencies - whether it was the small Jeyakumar against big Samy (photo) or little Nurul Izzah against Minister Sharizat.

The 'small' ones campaigned on their principles, while the 'big' ones fought with the power of incumbency, with abuse of authority, and without willingness to listen.

Moreover, the leadership was drunk with power and believed many of its own lies. Dr Mahathir Mohamad put it rather well in one interview: "The problem is we have become so arrogant. We suppress any opinion that we do not like and they begin to believe in their own reports, which are not actually consistent with what is happening in the country."

While at George Washington University, I had a full professor of two fields of knowledge: political science and psychology. He once gave a talk on "the socio-psychological profile of disabled leaders", having studied political leaders of a 100-year period.

He concluded that all political leaders achieve "their disabilities" when they stop listening to the contrarian's views and start believing false information given by their aids, who often concoct the stories to build up their own hypothesis.

biggest bn banner ad billboard 070308Let us take the example of BN advertisements over all radio stations. They were so simplistic and naïve while full of lies, that my neighbour's 16-year-old daughter told him to turn off the radio.

The mood at polling centres was somber. Most people came, voted and walked out. It appeared as if they were on a mission and did not need to talk about it to anyone. On Sunday, there was a joyous and celebrant mood everywhere I went.

Even during my early morning walks now, people are more friendly and more jubilant. Someone wrote to me that "he feels more Malaysian now".

The only question to my friends in the public services, department of national unity and the police Special Branch is: why is it that you did not get this palpable sense of anger among the people and warn the government?

But then again, I should not be too naïve but assume that you too wanted this new Merdeka for the good of the nation, for the longer term!

Well done Malaysia, we are hopefully beyond racial politics and are now on a journey to give meaning to this new Merdeka! God Bless Malaysia.

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