

**The sinking of Umno**  
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If what Raja Petra wrote in Malaysia Today before the elections is true, an Umno vice-president had said, "Even God could not sink Umno!" MCPX

The article began with the true story about the infamous Titanic from which the quote about Umno must have been derived.

'This ship is unsinkable, even God Himself can't sink it!' screamed a newspaper headline just before the Titanic's maiden voyage. The rest is history.

Maybe it is time for Hollywood or Bollywood to consider a movie about Umno and its voyage into the 12th general election - and how it foundered on the iceberg of bullying, arrogance and ignorance.

umno 57th agm 151106 abdullah ahmad badawi pak lah pointing outIts leaders will have to collectively admit that they have failed the people - at the last Umno annual general meeting, some 2,500 members spoke with an arrogance that has come back to haunt them. Only three million out of some 10 million people voted for Barisan Nasional (BN).

What then of the way forward towards a mature and fully democratic Malaysia? I believe that the first and critical step has been taken; the evolution of a potential two-party state system.

Indian Malaysians were liberated from the shackles of a post-colonial mindset of blind subservience, thanks to Hindraf. The majority of Malays clearly expressed a desire to see a cleaner culture of politics and good governance, thanks to Bersih. The Bar Council marched for judicial integrity. The new media has reported on corruption and rampant abuse of power.

phantom votersThe tipping point and a critical mass were reached and maybe jom membersihkan was written in the hearts of voters, especially when the Election Commission announced four days before the polls that even the fatwa-supported indelible ink was not to be used. Enough was enough.

Ordinary Malaysians do not have any grand agenda. They simply want a comfortable life without too much hassle or bother. They love Malaysia and their teh tarik and roti canai. They like Vision 2020; and most of them can handle the concept of Bangsa Malaysia and want to simply become Barisan Rakyat Malaysia, absent of racial overtones!

This may be the true Malaysia Boleh spirit; that Malaysians can and will mobilise for creativity and innovation, to add value in the most unique Malaysian way if given the chance. The elections with new promises offered them that chance, and they took it.

### **New agenda needed**

Beyond the two-party system and democratic governance, what Malaysia needs is a new Malaysian Agenda. Fortunately, there is already one proposed by CPPS that has been

adopted by about 42 civil society groups. Launched last August, it is called the Merdeka Statement.

CPPS argued for "working together for a more united, competitive, innovative and prosperous Malaysia". Now, who could really disagree with that? Some Umno ministers did and I believe one lost his seat!

With the tagline, 'Striving to cultivate a national identity that recognises and celebrates our diversity', the Merdeka Statement comprises eight thrusts:

1. Strengthening national unity
2. Enhancing international competitiveness
3. Creating an innovative economy
4. Redressing imbalances
5. Reinforcing institutions
6. Reforming education
7. Ensuring quality of life
8. Improving governance, fighting corruption

There are 102 recommendations for action. Every Malaysian must come to acceptance of these recommendations - only then can there be a new Malaysian Agenda owned by Malaysians for a united Bangsa Malaysia.

Two recommendations under the First Thrust are worth considering as a post-election step. The first is to set up a National Unity and Integration Commission. It could consist of former heads of political parties as well as notable and retired senior judges. They could review recommendations of the previous administration's National Unity Panel and report directly to Parliament.

lee kuan yew These wise-leaders, who were good enough to lead us before, must know where we are falling and failing. We just need to give them a chance to make another contribution as Senior Members, as Lee Kuan Yew (photo) does in Singapore. Let us not be too proud to learn from this example. Of course, the moderator would have to be a neutral and wise leader of high integrity, someone like Salleh Abas.

The other recommendation is the setting up of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Again, if we can gather credible judges and senior civil servants of the past, they can quite easily address the pain and abuse of Malaysians over the years.

If it is true that 30,000 Indian women are without proper documentation, could not this be considered 'intentional ethnic cleansing'? Or, if as the former Selangor MB has admitted, there are 5,000 Indians youths in the state without a birth certificate, wouldn't this be a clear and deliberate policy oversight?

When new immigrant Indonesians are given red ICs at will or 'new Sabahans' are created overnight, surely it is not wrong for some groups to be very aggrieved over this.

I suggest that the Parliamentary Committee on Integrity should be expanded into a Truth and Reconciliation Commission reporting to Parliament, and working to resolve genuine hurts and grievances.

If South Africa, which had more serious problems during the apartheid era can do this, surely it can be a case of Malaysia Boleh as well.

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