

Mahathir the agent provocateur
Malaysiakini.com
Apr 10, 2008
Halimah Mohd Said

I refer to the Malaysiakini report Dr M: Vote for him and you'll destroy Umno.

Many see Tun Mahathir as a former prime minister who is pulling the skeletons out of his own cupboard. He is perceived as a disgruntled old leader who is betraying the government of the day, his party and his people. Some see his rejection of Pak Lah, the successor of his own picking, as akin to a father disowning his own (Umno's) flesh and blood.

But the current Umno scenario is exactly the new Malay Dilemma Tun Mahathir would have anticipated. It shows clearly the extent of loyalty or kesetiaan that the Malays are capable of - a loyalty that is in direct proportion to the political power it can exact. As we are seeing, like the proverbial lallang, Umno members are veering right or left according to the current wind of the day.

I choose to see Tun Mahathir as the consistent agent provocateur or agent of provocation that the Malays need to take themselves more seriously. He is the voice that rises above the din of Malay factionalism in Umno. The Malays must rise above the petty squabbling in Umno which is inherited from a close-knit rural community.

I believe the current sentiments about Umno per se are misplaced. It's well and good that Umno took the Malays out of the colonial, pre-Merdeka woods and gave them the prospects for development. Granted the party consolidates Malay political aspirations. But what's in a name? Umno is not sacrosanct!

If Umno members are smart they will reinvent Umno by giving it a new name, United National Organisation or UNO, the Number One political party of Malaysia. The branding and the language of the discourse must change too.

They must push to a higher-level serious platforms like Multi-cultural Affirmative Action and call it just that - MAA. It is no longer expedient to shout about special Malay/Bumiputera rights via the NEP.

There is no need to wield the keris to reaffirm Article 153's constitutionally defined special position of the Malays. They will get the respect they deserve without having to assert Malay ketuanan or supremacy.

It is high time the Malays are honest with themselves. If they disliked the British condescension that accompanied their political and administrative supremacy and see it as the main cause of Malay backwardness, they must reject claims of superiority by any faction from within the party or without.

New sentiments especially of the younger voters point towards egalitarian multi-cultural party platforms in striving for a more equitable/equal society. Equity and equality must remain ideals the people strive for although the stark reality is that real equity and equality do not exist anywhere in the world.

For this reason Malays in particular, and Malaysians in general, must strive harder to maintain the economic and socio-political equilibrium for which the nation is known and

respected.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news//81172>