

After-shocks in the wake of the tsunami
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The political tsunami has come and gone, and what we are now experiencing are a series of after-shocks. MCPX

The Umno leadership is facing a showdown never experienced before – a massive wave of rallies and campaigns to force a change of leadership. Given the stature of our former PM, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, this campaign should muster considerable support, though this support is currently coming only from some division heads and branches, and some veteran Umno members.

Some ministers appear to be sharing the same viewpoints as our former PM except that they prefer to remain non-committal at the moment, obviously due to patronage reasons. But as the days go by, this anti-leadership campaign would most likely gather momentum and eventually snowball into a much greater force.

Some leaders, both at division and branch levels, may not demand an outright resignation on the part of the PM but any decision which does not convey clear support will be viewed as non-support. And this will further push the PM in the direction in tandem with Mahathir's initiatives.

As obviously reflected in the GE2008 results, the voting trend this time around was across racial lines. The rakyat voted for a clean and just government – one that is free from corruption, cronyism, better security and lower costs of living. And the rakyat had squarely put the blame on the whole BN government. Hence, as long as the same old faces still helm the government, the rakyat will continue to reject them whether they are from Umno, MCA or MIC.

These leaders must be sensitive enough to understand this, especially those who are linked to any of the above controversial issues. Therefore any effort to reinvent or re-brand their party would be futile as the rakyat knows fully well that these jokers cannot just change overnight after having been 'yes men' for decades.

At the same time, it would not be surprising to see some BN elected representatives switching camps to join Pakatan Rakyat, especially those from East Malaysia. Political allegiance in Sabah has always been known to be fluid and uncertain. Under such circumstances, Umno might end up as the biggest opposition party when Parliament convenes its first sitting.

MCA is faring no better as various groups are already holding rallies and campaigns to effect a similar change as Umno's. Some MCA leaders have spoken up while others are adopting a more non-committal stance, very much similar to their Umno counterparts. Accusations of favouritism, a sibling dynasty, side-lining tested veterans, arrogance, misunderstanding the Chinese populace and the like have been leveled at the party leadership for its dismal performance at the recent GE2008.

Some are clamouring for the party boss to step down, citing the main reason being that the election candidates were solely his choices – hence he should be solely responsible. Though not as vocal as their Umno counterparts, the rumblings cannot be ignored.

The MCA members are less vocal than Umno members, but as with ancient Chinese politicians, the power play will only rear its ugly head at the very final stages of the plot by which time only God can save them. The MCA, like Umno, requires a complete overhaul. To succeed and lay claim to truly represent the Chinese, it needs some sincere, honest and bold leaders – leaders who no longer participate in the ruling cabinet as 'yes men'.

They must be able to convince their Umno colleagues that the Chinese (and the Indians for that matter), are not out to encroach onto the special rights and privileges of the Malays as enshrined in the constitution, but rather, only wish to be given an equitable share of the nation's goodies – businesses, contracts, jobs, scholarships, education opportunities and what have you. As long as we get a fair share of all these, we are happy to go about earning a good living.

The MIC leadership, meanwhile, has been rejected outright, evident from the big loss of its No 1 in a constituency that had been his for decades. If this is not an outright rejection, then what is? Yet the message has not been clear enough to cause his honourable resignation. As long as this tainted icon stays, MIC will continue to be rejected.

Many Indians are still living in very miserable conditions, to the extent of being totally neglected whilst the nation progressed. Their leaders have failed to look into their plight. As with Umno and MCA, MIC too needs an overhaul and nothing less.

In the final analysis, the rakyat has come to a point where they do not want to be taken for granted. Slogans such as 'Vote for stability', 'Vote for Continuity' belong to the yesteryears. Education has brought about change and with the help of the Internet and cyber communication, the rakyat has taken that all-important first step towards changing the political landscape of Malaysia, and as acknowledged, the first step is the most important step.

I do not foresee any force that can stall this wave of change. In fact, it will only gain momentum and effect greater change. Whichever party that is favoured needs to ride this wave of change in order to stay relevant.

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