

**Hisham's 'keris' apology: Your say
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On Hisham apologises for keris act

Kee Thuan Chye: Hishammuddin's apology over his wielding of the keris reeks of doublespeak.

It's a double-edged 'apology'. He apologises not only to the non-Malays but also to the Malays. Why? How had he offended the Malays? Well, perhaps some right-thinking Malays would have been offended by his insensitivity -- fair enough. But he doesn't mean that. That's not his premise. Instead, he says he apologises to the non-Malays because of the fear his act had brought to the symbol. 'And to the Malays for not being able to uphold their symbol of heritage'.

What? All right, I'm not going to quibble over the faulty syntax. He did hold up the keris three times and nobody stopped him all those times. What is insidious is the point he's making. He's indirectly blaming the non-Malays for not understanding the symbol of wielding the keris and thereby preventing him from using it.

What kind of an apology is that? He's not really admitting a wrong with grace. He's still deflecting the blame onto others. And to add insult to injury, he's blaming the very people he offended in the first place. Hishammuddin is not sincere. The fact that he took such a long time to admit that his offensive act was one of the reasons for BN's poor performance at the elections indicates that. Given that Umno is now desperate to regain public support, his current statement seems aimed at that purpose.

Asked if the keris would still be waved at the next Umno youth assembly in December, he said, 'This is not the proper forum to discuss it'. When will there be a proper forum? What, indeed, is the proper forum? Is he not man enough to state his stand in front of the public here and now?

Where is his sincerity then? If he were truly sorry, he should come right out and say no, he will not wave the keris. He is just posturing. This is just another wayang performance by the keris-wielder.

Adcin: It is commendable that Hishammuddin has decided to apologise for his keris waving antics but it is a case of his being the right idea but at the wrong time. In fact, while I strongly believe that he should not have done it in the first place, once it was done he should have apologised immediately or just stuck to his guns and not apologised so pathetically like this. In the context of a 'lost' election, he has done a great disservice to Umno and Malays in general by groveling and pandering to whoever he feels he needs to now to redeem himself.

It is indeed a pitiful sight to see Umno losing the plot and stumbling along like this. Their dearth of capable leaders is going to lead to their ultimate ruin and until and unless they find leaders who understand what is important to the Malays (and I do not mean just shouting 'Ketuanan Melayu') there is no future for Umno.

Kumar: I am not sure why Hisham wanted to wave the keris in the first place. Who does he think he is anyway? A reincarnated Hang Tuah or Hang Jebat? But that was done when the

party concerned was hot and mighty. The tsunami must have washed away some of their gung-ho attitude.

But Hisham's arrogance is apparent and his apology is too late. The damage has been done. So, leaders of political parties, please use your brains. Please think before you act. Do not bring unto yourself a mess that you have to clean up later.

GC Tham: Nobody will deny that the keris is the symbol of Malay culture and Malay dignity. But the manner it was used and the person who waved it during the Umno AGMs sent out a different message to the non-Malays. It was not appropriate to wave the keris and shout some offensive remarks. Such things are damaging to our national unity. Other than that, all non-Malays should have no problem at all with the keris. Let's accept Hishammuddin's apology and move on.

HL Ooi: If MCA, Gerakan and MIC accept Hishammuddin's statement as an apology and rush to praise him for it, then they would have proven to the Malaysian public once again that they are the servants of Umno and its racist ideology.

P Ramakrishnan: Aliran is happy that Umno Youth chief Hishammuddin has finally come down to earth and to his senses. It is good of him to realise his unspoken mistake and to 'apologise to the non-Malays if they felt afraid of the symbol'.

It was not only the raising of the keris as a symbol of strength and Malay supremacy that upset many Malaysians but the seditious, threatening and provocative utterances of some Umno delegates that aroused the anger of all thinking Malaysians. What was sickening was the fact that these highly defamatory and inflammatory speeches were allowed and accepted by the Umno Youth general assembly without a word of caution or reprimand.

Not only that. Malaysians - including members from the BN coalition partners - were rebuked for their reaction to the keris-raising incident and the vicious utterances by some extreme elements from the Umno Youth. But people who reacted to this incident were taken to task for living in this country for so many years and not knowing the Malay culture.

But then they forget that the keris-kissing and brandishing of the keris was never a common display of culture in this country. None of the Umno leaders in all our history had acted in this provocative manner until Hishammuddin and his cohorts very arrogantly introduced this practice in 2005 and very defiantly repeated it in 2006.

After the disastrous performance of the BN in the 12 general election, even Umno leaders admitted that this raising, kissing and brandishing of the keris had contributed to their dismal performance. It is good that certain Umno leaders are able to see the truth at last.

But Hishammuddin is far removed from reality when he contends that 'the issue was not as big as it was made out to be'. He is still in the denial mode and perhaps too proud even to admit the severe damage that he and his cohorts had caused for the BN.

Hishammuddin must admit his mistake committed in 2005 and repeated in 2006 - only then his apology can be meaningful. Otherwise his apology will be misconstrued as a public relations exercise to whitewash Umno Youth. (The writer is Aliran president).

I Am Sorry: It is a fact that Hishammuddin's keris act has hurt the non-Malays and yet he apologised 'if it had affected the non-Malays'. This shows the political arrogance of Umno in general and Hishammuddin in particular. He should in fact give an unconditional and sincere

apology to the non-Malays.

Furthermore, he dares not give his commitment not to raise the keris again and tries to play up Malay sentiment. He should in fact just say a simple 'Sorry for hurting your feelings'.

Apology Not Accepted: When Tunku Abdul Rahman raised the keris, it was to proclaim Merdeka for all Malaysians. Let us not forget that this 'Pretender' raised the keris followed by incendiary speeches attacking the nation's ethnic Chinese and Indian communities. And what does he mean by 'I am not a vain and arrogant person, I can accept this' nonsense?

The rakyat by their vote have given him, Umno(for not reprimanding him) and Umno Youth, the clear message that this is NOT acceptable. And what kind of an apology is this when he cannot confirm if his keris-wielding antics will stop on the next Umno youth assembly? I wish he will continue to do it ; then he would surely ensure the final demise of Umno in the next general elections as if he hammered the final nail in himself.

So let us encourage him to continue this, we'll see what happens with Umno's 78 seats in the next election. Hopefully, when it dwindles again to insignificance, he will learn how to apologise humbly or wave his keris everyday for all we care.

Xroy: The man who held the keris up high at the Umno assembly and proclaimed 'Ketuanan Melayu' and smiled when asked when he was going to use the keris by its members, is now saying 'I am sorry if I have offended the other races'. When he said 'Ketuanan Melayu', little did he realise that the Malays are as much immigrants to the Malay peninsular as is the Indian and the Chinese. The Orang Asli and the natives of Sarawak and Sabah are the real sons of the soil and with that one action, he undermined their right to the land of their fathers.

'I wish to apologise but I am not going to say I'll not do it again.' Oh, Hishammuddin you are a useless politician whom into the ranks of political power you came by virtue of your family name. I respect your grandfather for he was a visionary while your father had integrity. You are nothing but a confused child.

Tham: I do not doubt the Malay race is supreme in the Peninsular Malaysia only, other than that I do not see Malay supremacy in Borneo or in any other country. Apologising to the other races for keris-wielding and apologising to the Malays for not being able to wield the keris is quite confusing. Does it mean that the Chinese and Indians should also be apologetic for not wielding something?

'Ketuanan Cina/India' will make the Malays feels intimidated, therefore it makes perfect sense whence 'Ketuanan Melayu' will make the Chinese and Indians feels intimidated. As a member of the government, one needs to take heed of every citizen's feeling. Realising, admitting and apologising for one's mistake is the work of a brave one. I salute Hishammudin for apologising to other races, but not for apologising to the Malays for not wielding the keris.

To be a politician in a multi-racial country, one needs to have support from all races, not just one. There is nothing wrong in admitting and apologising for a mistake. I hope the governments of both the ruling and opposition coalition can make a better Malaysia.

Ben Lee: The apologies are non-conditional. Sincere and contrite apologies do not use the conditional 'if'. Let's have one consistent standard on what constitutes an apology. It wasn't merely the act of raising the keris. A conditional 'if' statement, really means that individual

isn't contrite. One could interpret the individual is sorry only because of the consequences experienced at the March 8 elections.

On Najib: Keris apology won't derogate Malay dignity

Meady: Najib's comments simply negates Hishammuddin's attempt at apologising to those he has offended. Such is the calibre of leadership that does not augur well for Malaysian society. As for Samy Vellu; he has not uttered differently from his ministerial days.

Om Prakash: As DPM Najib has spoken that the apology by Hishammuddin will not derogate the Malays, it is actually more accurate to say that it will not be of any consequence to the Malays because the excuse to use Malay tradition is only to justify the rhetoric Umno members and not the Malays at large. The Malay culture is not arrogant or rhetoric in any way at all but Umno chose to take advantage of it to exploit it for its party propaganda. Umno stops at nothing to exploit with dreaded consequences for the long term development of the rakyat and the country. God Save Malaysia.

Hooi Giam: In most countries, an action like Hishammudin's would have got the perpetrator sacked from high office. But obviously, this is not the case in racist Malaysia where government officers, including those in high office, can continue to make racist comments with impunity.

According to Wikipedia, Najib Tun Razak in 1987 raised his keris and vowed that 'it will be bathed in Chinese blood' when he defended the issue of Malay privileges. If true, not only has Najib not apologised for his actions ; he is not fit to hold any position, least of all deputy PM.

On Cheras Umno wants Zulhasnan out

Hamisu: The above report said: 'In another development, Syed Ali also defended the controversial raising of the keris during the Umno annual general assembly by Youth chief Hishammuddin Hussein. He said this was the 'rightful tradition of Malay heritage'. 'I don't think Hishammuddin should apologise for the incident. Why should we? It is our culture and we should have the right to practice our culture,' he added. He said the keris incident should not be politicised as even the Sultans carry the keris during formal functions.

Syed Ali fails to understand that if it is a rightful tradition, then the Chinese too have a rightful tradition to wield a shao-lin kung-fu sword during MCA AGMs. So why the double standards? The sultans carry a keris, yes, but they never use it to shout a battle cry like Hishammuddin did and did not ask for the keris to be bathed in Chinese blood. Wake up! You have misused your tradition.

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