

Hisham's apology: 'Where's the sincerity?'
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The Devil's Advocate: Hishammuddin Hussein's attempted 'apology' is no apology at all. It is classic Umno/BN wedge politics to divide and rule the races. In effect, his position is if he apologises for any offence to non-Malays for the manner in which he raised the keris at successive Umno AGMs, then he needs to apologise to Malays for 'failure to uphold the Malay symbol (keris)'. That is no apology. That is setting the Malays against non-Malays and vice-versa.

From this we can gather that Umno has not learnt its lessons from the 12th GE ie, that Malays and non-Malays have voted across ethnic lines to send a clear message to Umno and BN - clean up your act, stop playing ethnic politics, be accountable for your actions and that the rakyat are the ultimate rulers of this land. Malays and non-Malays are not offended by the keris per se. It was in the threatening way it was unsheathed (incl. accompanying remarks) at Malaysia's most important political gathering that was found to be toxic to ethnic relations.

As for Najib, thanks for once again confirming your ineptitude and darker side as the PM-in-waiting by supporting Hisham's remarks. The both of you fall far short of your parents' and grandparents' broader vision for a united and progressive plural society for Malaysia.

Arianna: Where is the sincerity in that apology? It came only after much criticism from BN party leaders and their own media who attributed their 'poll loses' on March 8 to that 'keris' waving antics.

No, Hisham. We did not read you wrong when you raised the 'keris' during the Umno Youth assembly. Anymore than the youth members who later delivered fiery racial speeches inspired by your 'keris' waving acts.

No, Hisham, you did not consider the 'keris' as a symbol of Malay heritage or to defend Malay culture, It was all about Umno's 'Ketuanan Melayu' politics. Did you not notice how our King Mizan treated the 'keris' during his coronation? He did not un-sheath it but let it remain in its scabbard. We Malaysians know what that symbolises and there are no question asked.

But you, Hisham, you wielded the 'keris' in front of us and dared anyone to oppose 'Ketuanan Melayu' Umno-style. The 'keris' is harmless. It is the person holding it that is dangerous. No, there was no sincerity in that apology or we would have felt it. Try saying it from the heart next time.

Old Timer: By itself, this 'keris' matter seems to me, to be a big hubbub over nothing. A storm in a teacup. I don't think Hishammuddin had any mala fide intention towards the non-Malays when he raised it. It is just like raising the trophy at the end of a sporting competition. Were it any other person however, I would question the motive. But he is a decent sort. The act itself means nothing to me.

BM: As far as the non-Malays are concerned, this is not an apology at all. You have offended the whole of the non-Malays in Malaysia. Do you think you can escape? Well, anyway, now Umno wants him out of the way as he is surely an incurable virus spreading rapidly. Hisham, serve you right and Umno, make this a lesson for all leaders to learn.

Zainal Taib: As a Malay I totally disagree with Hishammuddin`s act of apologising for what he felt was his wrongdoing in unsheathing the keris and hoisting or kissing it during the Umno 2005 and 2006 congregations. The tradition of unsheathing the keris and hoisting it or kissing it is an old Malay tradition usually practiced during openings of big congregations or ceremonies, such as at an investiture of a monarch or installation of the sultan.

The act of unsheathing the keris and hoisting or kissing it as such is certainly not meant to be a provocative gesture. It is, if you like, a gesture in an oath-taking, which should be taken in similar context to that of the raising of hand in the court by a witness when swearing or giving an oath or declaration that he would tell the truth and only the truth.

For that reason, I do not see why one has to be upset by Hishammuddin`s keris unsheathing act. For the same reason, I dont see why Hishammuddin felt that he should apologise. He should have explained and protected its sanctity and not apologise for it.

I read a lot of dissent on Hishammuddin`s keris unsheathing gesture. Is it because it has been `played up' by MCA and Gerakan youth wings with the opposition grinding the matter further? Relax, my friends, please do not `boil' this matter up further. Hishammuddin made an innocent gesture and that`s all there is to it. We have much, much bigger matters to work together on. So let`s not spend too much time and energy splitting hairs over this little matter.

Disgruntled: How sincere is this apology from the minister? Are you trying to bluff the rakyat again? Done anything wrong and an apology will solve it?

In that vein, you reign supreme. But my dear minister, if you were speaking from the bottom of your heart, you surely would have apologised long ago, even before the last elections. It is after so much thought of it affecting your future political status that you now say 'I'd better apologise, then maybe as true Malaysians they are always forgetful and wont be long before they have forgotten about that incident'. What a shame, you cannot even promise that you will not ever do it again.

On Second bridge cancellation a blessing

Define-the-Problem: I agree that one bridge for Penang is enough. A bridge is just a means to get one from the mainland to the island. It is equivalent of one flying from KL to Penang. But if the rate of arrival of the planes is higher than what the Penang airport is able to handle, then do you add more runways or more planes? Adding a second bridge is the same as adding more planes. Then the planes will have to hover longer in the air waiting for a vacant runway.

The obvious solution is to clear the planes that have already landed ie, disperse the vehicular traffic that has already crossed over to Penang so that more traffic can use the Penang bridge. But if this not possible, then adding a second bridge will also result in congestion on the second bridge.

MySecret62: Time and time again, we have seen this happening. Instead of ensuring that the rakyat is taken care of and the country put on a stronger footing, the powers-that-be regress into a self-serving, protectionist mode.

Now we see BN deliberately sidelining, withdrawing funds, even threatening to make

Pakatan Rakyat pay for winning the states. It would seem that they are so determined to take back what they lost that they are willing to risk Malaysia losing further in the global competitive arena. I'm sure our neighbours are rubbing their hands in glee as we fight among ourselves.

To these (BN) losers, I would say Malaysia belongs to us Malaysians, not BN , not even Pakatan. Malaysia has so much to give and gain for its rakyat. It's high time we see through all the charade and smokescreen to demand and expect what is deserving for the rakyat of this great Malaysia.

On Khir Toyo: Umno has lost touch with reality

CH Ong: I almost believed Khir Toyo was sincere when he talked about Umno having lost touch with reality, the federal government's arrogance and insensitivity, political parties becoming the voice of the rakyat, Umno leaders having to learn new methods and reforms which must be introduced.

But when I remember reading about the way his wife transferred about RM9 million out of Balkis' bank account shortly after the general elections and that Khir himself defended his wife's action, I realised that Khir, like Umno is still not in touch with reality, and that Khir is still as arrogant as the federal government, and that Khir was only giving lip service when he said that political parties must become the voice of the rakyat, and that Khir, like his other Umno colleagues, has not learnt from their mistakes and that Khir does not know the meaning of reform.

Jane: Funny how this fine fellow became enlightened so late in the day when Umno lost touch with reality long ago. Would he be just as enlightened if Barisan hadn't lost so heavily at the election? It would be nice if he could also enlighten the rest of us about his wife's dealings at Balkis. The quality of Umno/Barisan politicians is truly disgusting - the only enlightenment I see for them is if they got hit by a bolt of lightning.

On No official invitation for Azizah, Anwar

Engsin: It's sad to note that the people who run the Parliament secretariat have no respect for the opposition leader. It also clearly shows that Parliament is not independent from the government. Just imagine, the government doesn't even dare have Anwar sitting in the August house with them yet before the election they shouted a lot of negative things about him. Now, the government MP's can't even have the guts to face the 'Tiger' straight in the eyes. It clearly shows what kind of people are running the government.

On MCA embroiled in another land scam

Retired Soldier: This is just the tip of the iceberg. If all politicians were to declare their assets especially 'acquisition of government land' it would be shocking. If I am not mistaken, many years ago when a 'Puan Sri' in Johor obtained about 100 acres of land, the explanation from the land department was that 'She applied as a citizen and in accordance with the procedures and we approved it'. Why is that the poor rakyat find it impossible to obtain even one lot of land for a house?

The Armed Forces Council Instructions which were signed by the King states that 15 percent

of state land must be reserved for ex-serviceman. How many ex-servicemen benefitted from this? Do the state land authorities even know of the existence of this instruction?

I hope that when (not if) Pakatan comes into office they will honor the ex-servicemen who kept the politicians safe all this while.

On Ku Li: Sabah crossover a possibility

Joe Fernandez: Why should BN MPs in Sabah cross over to the opposition alliance unless there are guarantees that they are not going from the frying pan into the fire? The question of MPs in Borneo joining PKR does not arise. That's wishful thinking on Anwar's part. He's feeling the heat because his party is composed of mostly Indian and Chinese representatives and few Malays.

If Anwar wants the MPs in Sabah and Sarawak to join, or at least support, his opposition alliance to form the federal government, he should state his terms in public. The minimum acceptable terms are:

- * returning the autonomy of Sabah and Sarawak;
- * sharing the federal government in an equitable way including allowing the deputy prime ministers to choose the prime minister from among themselves;
- * returning the CM's post in Sabah and Sarawak to the Kadazandusun Murut and Dayak communities respectively; and
- * rotating the Governor's post among all the states' communities.

On Gov't to subsidise rice price

Chiawhong: Shahrir urged Malaysians to change their eating habits to reduce the impact of rising rice prices. 'We have to see changes in lifestyle among Malaysians to accommodate this economic situation,' he said.

Unfortunately Shahrir did not tell us how to change our eating habits. Should we eat less rice and instead eat more bread, fish, meat, fruit and vegetables which are even more expensive than rice? Perhaps what he meant was that Malaysians should simply tighten our belts and eat less of everything.

On Karpal: I didn't insult Islam

Chuaaj: To Karpal and PAS, let us not discuss the Islamic state issue without consulting each other. To me, this issue is secondary. We have more urgent matters like building up Pakatan Rakyat and fighting corruption. They are the biggest tasks now.

I hope Karpal is not too sensitive on this issue and the same goes to PAS. Let us be more tolerant of each other and check the facts before jumping the gun.

Rage Against the Machine: I feel that I speak for most Malaysians when I humbly ask Karpal Singh to keep quiet. He seems to have this terrible disease called 'foot in mouth' if left

untreated could destroy the Pakatan Rakyat coalition and hand Umno/BN the five states won in addition making sure PR will never form the next federal government.

Although Karpal is a highly intelligent man, he doesn't seem to grasp the fact that his each and every action against PAS will be played up to the hilt by the government-controlled media as 'cracks appearing on the PR veneer'. Karpal should keep his opinions within the PR family and not make hasty and silly remarks to the media.

If his actions would be the deciding factor on whether PR makes or breaks, then it'd be a sad day for all of us. I feel Karpal is better than this and should be an intelligent statesman.

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