

**Malay unity a redundant battle cry?**  
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**Joe Fernandez**

Ironically, Umno leaders have been self-servingly focused on the "fate of the Malays" ever since the March 8 political tsunami which saw four of the richest states in Malaysia falling into the hands of the opposition, along with the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and Kelantan, long held by PAS, a member of Pakatan Rakyat.  
MCPX

selangor adun ceremony 220408 khir toyoFormer Selangor menteri besar Dr Mohd Khir Toyo, no less, has been busy since his ouster from public office in Malaysia's richest state, spewing gallons of venom in his blog and public statements in the media.

He continues to harp on the politics of race and hate, as he propagates the need for total unity among the Malays. He routinely refers to DAP as Chinese extremists and Hindraf (Hindu Rights Action Force) as racists. It was Hindraf's makkal sakthi (people power) phenomenon on which the opposition rode to power. The question may be asked: Unity for whose benefit? Unity against whom?

In any case, realpolitik doesn't envisage total Malay unity. The bigger a community, the more disunited it will be, goes the observation. It's the same with the Malays who can hardly call themselves an overwhelming majority when they just about make up 60 percent of the population, by official count, given that the actual statistics are shrouded in national secrecy.

At one time, not so very long ago, the Malays were united because they were all poor, so to speak. The anti-Malayan Union rallies in 1946 which saw the birth of Umno and the May 13, 1969 race riots, which saw an increase in the number of enrollments in silat classes, were the triggers which resulted in total Malay unity and enabled the birth of the New Economic Policy, a euphemism to play Robin Hood for the elite.

Thereafter, it was downhill all the way because of the greed of a handful of leaders among the elite who refused to share "the spoils of office." Some will say loot, in a cynical reference to the NEP. This greedy approach saw the exit of PAS from the Barisan Nasional not long after they joined in the 1970s.

**A lost cause?**

PAS even lost Kelantan, the state they had ruled for so long, not long after they quit the ruling coalition. The party went into political wilderness, licking its wounds, waiting for a comeback.

Once bitten, twice shy. PAS is not going to fall for the same trick twice after having come in from the cold. Umno has only itself to blame.

Is Umno willing to demonstrate its sincerity by turning over the government to PAS in the name of total Malay unity and walk away from it all? Certainly not.

umno pas and selangorSo, what's the point of holding the ongoing muzakarah (dialogue)

with PAS? Nothing will come of it, apart from feeding the frenzy of wishful thinking in the, as Anwar Ibrahim has aptly labeled, racist mainstream Malay press.

Khir tells us on the sidelines of the muzakarah that he had desperately sought a coalition government with PAS in Selangor after March 8 but was thwarted by Anwar Ibrahim.

Khir was even prepared to hand over the menteri besar and deputy menteri besar's posts to PAS so long as they kept away from Anwar, the bane of all their woes.

In any event, the failed bid set the stage for the muzakarah, for which Khir claims credit. He seemed to have forgotten to take credit as well for the spate of temple demolishings and idol smashings in Selangor which saw the birth of Hindraf and its spillover onto the streets of Kuala Lumpur when tens of thousands paralysed the capital city.

Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad further sowed the seeds of disunity when he ousted his deputy Musa Hitam and subsequently finance minister Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, the prince from Kelantan. There was no great ideological dispute among these three men.

### **Capitalising on disunity**

Malay politics is basically based on uneasiness with the Chinese in business. They differed because Mahathir wanted it all and wanted to outstay his welcome. He was not willing to allow the next generation, Musa-Razaleigh, to take office.

Neither was he willing to share with them the economic cake which he felt was too small even for himself. So, he just had Daim Zainuddin along for company as they happily ran the treasury under one pretext or another and ran up the national debt in the cause of nepotism, cronyism, collusion and corruption.

mahathir pc 260608 05Power soon got the better of Mahathir and he fell out even with his bosom pal Daim from home state Kedah, the rice bowl now a prize possession in the opposition bag. This further splintered Malay politics.

Before Mahathir fell out with Daim, he had Anwar – of the third generation – incarcerated, thanks to a compliant judiciary, on sodomy and corruption charges, as it subsequently transpired in the appeals court after Mahathir's departure. Anwar, waving the banner of the marginalised Malay urban middle class, was seen as a threat to his own position. The rest is history.

Mahathir also took on the Malay royalty in a desperate gamble to wrest economic concessions away from them. In the wake of the March 8 political tsunami, it may be payback time as evident in the sudden emergence of royal blogger Raja Petra Kamaruddin and his sensational revelations.

Raja Petra's revelations read even better than the script of a combined Hollywood/Bollywood blockbuster or soap opera. There's beauty, sex, murder and international cloak-and-dagger scenes involving the high and mighty and high drama in the courts. There are even some submarines somewhere in there and talk of shady deals and betrayals.

Is this a microcosm of Malaysia's Malay-dominated government for the last 50 years? Will it

be time soon to take a curtain-call, as pledged by Anwar, even as he battles new sodomy allegations in a re-run of the same script used 10 years ago?

### **Change is imminent**

We can only await Sept 16, Malaysia Day, with bated breath. Anwar has pledged victory to wrest Putrajaya away from the BN or, in a latest twist if the gods don't favour them on Sept 16, fresh elections.

Mahathir, like Khir, has worried himself sick over the fate of the Malays, whatever that means, in his blog. Mahathir was prime minister for 22 years. All of Malaysia's heads of government since independence have been Malays. Why then the need to worry about the fate of the Malays?

The assessment is clear. Malay politics are driven by Umno's greed, not ideology and class divisions (read PKR) since March 8 tempered by Islamic fundamentalism (read PAS). As long as this state of affairs continue, the Malays will continue to splinter politically.

No number of illegal immigrants from the surrounding islands getting on the electoral roll will help the Malay cause in the numbers game. In fact, there is evidence in Malaysian Borneo that illegal immigrants becoming Malaysians through the back door, have their own take on politics and cannot be expected to contribute to the Malay cause. The five percent shift in Malay votes to the opposition on March 8 in fact, came from these people.

The best that Khir can do under the circumstances is to run away and never come back.

About Mahathir, the less said, the kinder.

anwar ibrahim freed from police ipk detention pc 170708 waving Anwar is on record as stating that he has forgiven everybody, including Mahathir, after the first sodomy allegations against him 10 years ago.

Anwar may have been in a forgiving mood because of the spectacular performance of his opposition alliance at the March 8 general election. However, he is no longer so forgiving after the ongoing sodomy investigations against him. He has now pledged to lawan, tetap lawan (fight, definitely fight).

Having initiated the sodomy allegations, the BN government cannot be expected to backtrack since that would lend further credence to the public suspicion that the allegations are the result of a political conspiracy hatched at the highest levels. Hence, the government would proceed with the investigations cautiously and head, even if somewhat gingerly, in the direction of the courts. This is Umno's and BN's death wish.

The sodomy allegations have, meanwhile, strengthened the opposition alliance's resolve to seize the reins of power by Sept 16, failing which, Plan B calls for fresh general elections which will see them sweeping into power with a two-thirds majority and setting the political agenda for Malaysia for the next 12 to 15 years.

JOE FERNANDEZ is an educationist and former newspaper editor and ex-civil servant who feels compelled to put pen to paper when something doesn't quite jell with his weltanschauung (worldview).

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