

Is Anwar the great reformer?
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Whoah ... the effusive cries amongst some commentators - and bloggers - of a new dawn in the politics of the long Umno-ruled Malaysia following the rise and rise of opposition PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim are too much. Too much.

anwar ibrahim mp swearing in 080828 04Some claim the promise of a new democracy is nigh. A new Merdeka, they say, is on the cusp of a new Malaysian history. And all because Anwar won the Permatang Pauh by-election quite convincingly from the much-vaunted Umno candidate (what's his name?). More, Anwar sent Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad's suddenly filthy rich son-in-law, Umno MP and confidante, Khairy Jamaluddin, scampering with his tail between his legs and manure on his face.

Today Malaysians are waiting with almost bated breath for Sep 16. Apparently, on this day, Anwar, with help from sitting (and non-sitting) politicians in the ruling Barisan Nasional, will topple the regime, headed by the dreadfully useless and pathetic Abdullah and the entirely racist, bungling, corrupt and morally bankrupt Umno.

With that Anwar will usurp national power. He will turn a severely bastardised parliamentary democracy, replete with all manner of laws that approximates it to a Stalinist-like political system since the May 13 1969 race riots, into a flowering, full-blown, truly multi-racial democracy - with Malaysian characteristics of course.

It would not surprise me if some Malaysians, in their manic over-enthusiasm of the prospect of the birth of a politically transformed country, start reciting passages of wild and wooly promises from Francis Fukuyama's early tome The End of History and the Last Man and passages from the perennially heady New York Times' columnist and author Thomas Friedman's The Lexus and the Olive Tree - passages such as this one by Friedman: "America [Malaysia], at its best, is not just a country. It's a spiritual value and role model." Yikes.

Such utterly ridiculous and completely nauseating evangelical sermons, like those one hears in all organized religions, are best reserved for countries such as Zimbabwe, ruled by one of the world's most vile thugs, tyrants, kleptomaniacs, racists and murderers, Robert Mugabe (pic).

robert mugabeFormer premier Dr. Mahathir Mohamad and his handpicked successor, Abdullah - whom Mahathir, such a good Muslim, now bitterly hates - have given succor to Mugabe over many years. Or the similarity of models to be found between South Africa and Malaysia.

Which is why the Malay regime has feted on Prime Minister Thabo Mbeki, who sends emissaries to Putrajaya to learn the Malaysian 'model' whilst Mbeki, like China, cosies up to Mugabe, saving a vile dictator from facing a justly deserved vile end.

Glorious promises

Interestingly, years later, even Fukuyama debunked his own work, his thesis, though not before making a quid or two from book sales, and who will say that even in the United

States, under George W. Bush - the boy king and chief dingbat - now suffers from a malevolent form of a democratic deficit not seen since Jeffersonian times.

But here's Anwar today, like a Jefferson, basking in the twilight of his by-election win, with new sodomy charges hanging over his head, in Fukuyama-like posture, advancing glorious promises for tomorrow. Is Anwar offering a Jeffersonian precept: "That government is best that governs least"? In Malaysia?

Many thinking Malaysians must be wondering what Sep 16 holds for them, let alone for the country that, since independence from the British in 1957, has struggled to forge a genuine nation. Like the last 51 years, the next 51 years could be no different politically or in any other way, and Malaysia may well remain, in the terms expounded by Benedict Anderson, a country of 'imagined communities'.

ahmad ismail bukit bendera umno penang racist cina tumpang 050908 04Bukit Bendera Umno chief Ahmad Ismail (pic) has, apparently, labeled the Chinese and Indians and other non-Malay Muslims as nothing more than greedy, selfish, ungrateful "penumpang" (squatters) in Malay-Muslim Malaysia. And when Abdullah tried to sanction him, the pock-faced Ahmad virtually spat in Abdullah's face because he says many in Umno support his crudely racist hide.

This is intimidation yet again, no more different that the Keris-wielding Hishamuddin Onn, son of former prime minister Hussein Onn, baying for non-Malay blood if Malay supremacy and Islam are challenged. Onn Jaafar, Hishamuddin's grandfather and founder of Umno, dumped his own party when its members rejected his idea to open the party to multi-racial membership. With the exception of Tunku Abdul Rahman, the first prime minister whom Mahathir knifed in the back soon after the 1969 race riots, Malay leaders have been plainly and increasingly indecent and racist.

Anwar should make amends for past wrongs. Question is whether he can. He has Herculean tasks ahead. His political will will be sorely tested at every turn.

For example, will Anwar, for once and for all, rid Malaysian politics and all of its institutions of power, coercion or state terror - government at all levels, the Malay-dominated bureaucracy, the Malay-dominated Police Force, the Malay-dominated Armed Forces - of the stigma of corruption, collusion and nepotism? For the stigma never went away after the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s. In fact it re-manifested itself quickly, more vigorously, under Mahathir's so-called leadership, and then Abdullah's since 2003, rather like a malignant cancer.

Special Branch

Will Anwar rid Malaysian political and social and economic life of endemic and embedded racism that has been institutionalised since British colonialism and ingrained in Malaysians of all races from birth through education policies, labor market policies and practices, indeed in all facets of social life in Malaysia?

polis malaysia police 260307 special branch strike team utkWill Anwar rid Malaysia of the violence and brutality that has attended national politics as the regime, time and again, uses its vile intimidatory tactics not dissimilar to Nazi Germany's and the regime's Gestapo-like Special Branch to do the regime's political dirty work, to beat down its political critics or dissenters and jailing them without recourse to the courts?

In fact the very idea that Abdullah has asked the Special Branch to investigate the possibility of his coalition party's crossovers to Anwar's side smacks not of his arrogance but his downright narrow-mindedness, his fear or paranoia, his incompetence and, worse, his stupidity. By all accounts, Abdullah's action amounts to an abuse of power and of the office of prime minister - something about which every Malay-dominated regime since 1969 has institutionalised and the despicable Mahathir deepened, and with which Malaysians, especially the non-Malays, have had to live, with the exception, of course, of those conga line of suckhole Chinese and Indian politicians who cowardly joined Umno in a shameless coalition of oppressors of democratic and human rights.

Will Anwar, like Asif Ali Zardari who was elected president of Pakistan at the weekend, reform the judiciary so that none of them are in fact political appointees handpicked first by Mahathir and then Abdullah - judges and magistrates who protect their political masters above all, and who, in the course of their sullied robes, are rewarded in all manner of ways? Will he disrobe those who have dishonoured the profession and the office they hold, falling prey to corrupt, greedy and immoral BN and Umno politicians?

Equally importantly, will Anwar ensure the separation of powers between state and conversion forum protest 090807 mini posters legislature and (Islamic) religion? This will mean he will have to amend the constitution that has been so bastardised by the Malay-Umno regime since 1969, especially by Mahathir, but one that has also enormously and nefariously benefited the Malaysian Chinese Association, the Malaysian Indian Congress, Gerakan and the like, who have used the constitution and the coercive powers of the state to protect their self interests.

Will Anwar, should he become prime minister, for once and for all, reveal for public scrutiny, and compel every politician, past and present, including himself, and every bureaucrat, big and small, past and present, including every police officer, whatever his or her rank, and senior military personnel, to reveal their wealth held inside (and outside) the country?

And will he have the gumption to punish those who have accumulated wealth by crooked means if proved? After all, the world knows Malaysia as a massively corrupt country, run by massively corrupt and untrustworthy men and women who selfishly serve their individual interests before - and if at all - the interests of their country.

Will Anwar deal with the Islamic religious zealots, the loony radical Islamists and fundamentalists who dominate the opposition PAS but who are Anwar's partners - for now - in PKR, and who also dominate Abim, of which he was once its leader before allowing himself to be co-opted by Mahathir to join Umno, and the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (Jakim), Dakwah Islamiah Malaysia Foundation (Yadim), Federal Territory Islamic Council (Maiwp) and the Federal Territory Islamic Department (Jawi), all of whom survive on their hopelessly closed minds and preach ignorance to the ignorant via ignorance and racist malice, who want to turn a secular Malaysia into an Islamic state, regardless of the multi-racialism of the country?

raja petra to police station on burma doctor sd 040908 03Which brings to mind: Just how many of them in fact are as pious as they claim to be? Indeed, are they really "good, non-hypocritical" Muslims, asked blogger Raja Petra Kamaruddin.

And for his troubles for being open and honest and daring, unlike the politicians and others, the pusillanimous Malay patron regime and its equally pusillanimous Islamist clients are persecuting him.

No substance

I've been listening to and reading Anwar's speeches. All I have heard and read so far is rhetoric. Nothing more. There's no substance. Not yet. Perhaps the substance will come. It has to come, lest Anwar too becomes just another of those disingenuous Malaysian politicians from all sides who are good only at making a racket.

Anwar needs broad-based support. Whilst there is now a people-driven momentum gathering pace, as witnessed in Permatang Pauh, he still needs to bank on political crossovers from the BN coalition parties.

Chandra Muzaffar, professor of politics at USM, says crossovers of politicians from one political party to another are not a credible solution to political problems of confidence, that they are not politically legitimate. In fact crossovers are immoral, Chandra claims. Absolute rubbish.

When voters change their votes from one party to another, is this not legitimate, or indeed dissimilar to a crossover of politicians, or those politicians who cross the floor inside parliament when voting on conscionable issues?

49 mp back benchers parliament taiwan study trip klia airport 090908Political crossovers happen in most democracies, Westminster and otherwise, but where checks and balances form and protect, as far as possible, the kernel of truth, right, justice and morality, through an independent media and judiciary.

An independent media and judiciary do not exist in Malaysia. Not one, and not once since 1969. Political crossovers are perfectly legitimate forms of political expression and activism. It's called political conscience, or voting with one's feet, of which, sadly though not unpredictably, Malaysian politicians are devoid.

If political crossovers work for Anwar and his cause to seize power, fine. Toss out the filth - the corrupt Umno/BN regime and all those within what the late and eminent political/historical sociologist Charles Tilly called "protection rackets", instituted and run by the state, and who operate like a mob, like an "organised crime".

Question is: What happens next? And, mind you: It won't be the only question.

A 'new Merdeka'? I, for one, am not holding my breath.

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