

**Obama wouldn't have made it in Malaysia**  
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**Shoba Mano**

When Senator Barack Obama gave his victory speech after he won the office of president of the US yesterday, he said he wanted to see the walls of racism fall in the US and all Americans move together as one nation.

Even as Malaysians watched the shouts of jubilation and the word 'Change, change, change' ring throughout every state in the US, we can't help but remember how we had been cheated of this change, this year, in our very own general elections.

As Americans of all races are coming to realise Dr Martin Luther King's dream for all Americans to be treated equally, here in Malaysia the racial divide gets worse by the day. Now religion is also being roped in to create a further wedge between the races and we hear of petty issues like banning Muslims from practising yoga, Muslim women from wearing pants, etc.

Corruption is so rife it is bankrupting the country, the judiciary and police are in shambles, innocent people are being jailed without trial but how odd it is that we never hear these 'religious' people speak out against this civil rights erosion.

Umno's race-based politics suit only the racist elite as they plunder the wealth of the nation with the media, judiciary and the police turning a blind eye and deaf ear to the atrocities happening.

I feel sorry for Pakatan Rakyat who must feel March 8 was a pyrrhic victory. Their motions are being shot down in parliament and their invaluable exposure of corruption with concrete evidence is being rejected by the speaker for discussion and accountability.

Is there no institution left in Malaysia that is not tainted?

I didn't know whether to laugh or cry watching Malaysia's former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Al Jazeera commenting on Obama's victory and going on like a broken record about US' human rights abuses in Guantanamo while we have decent human beings like Raja Petra Kamarudin, the Hindraf leaders and others imprisoned simply for standing up for truth and justice.

If Obama had been born in Malaysia, he would have been imprisoned under the ISA for even daring to run for such a high post as that might be deemed a challenge to Ketuanan Melayu. Or perhaps they would think of some trumped-up charge of sodomy to tarnish his image in public and carry out a whole charade in Malaysia's kangaroo courts at taxpayers' expense.

Despite the Lingam tape scandal and another charade of a royal commission, Malaysians have yet again not seen any of the perpetrators punished.

We saw on television the many faces of jubilant Americans from taxi drivers to celebrities, from the ghettos of Harlem to the suburbs of New York and Chicago. From all of them we heard one voice. Americans of all races said in one voice, 'The United States of America is the greatest nation in the world! God bless America!'

In Obama's election, we see yet another reason why that is true. When are we going to see our change in Malaysia? God Save Malaysia!

That would put paid to a Malaysian vision.

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