

**Umno - the end of the end or ...?**  
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Are we witnessing the demise of Umno? Will Umno be sent to the grave? Has she been given the death sentence finally? While numerous writings of late described such a scenario and eventuality, are we truly seeing the end of Umno?

Too bizarre or presumptuous though it may seem, but decades of "sins of omissions and commissions" make many believe in such a proposition. Some are simply too tired, others utterly disgusted and a few immensely disturbed by its mere mention.

**Much as I wish it is the case, I beg to differ.**

That may sound upsetting enough, but coming from a PAS and Pakatan MP may even make it sounds like weird. Weren't we doggedly working all these years to send them to the grave?

So why is this writer expressing such a contrarian idea? Am I becoming a "turncoat" or "mole" of sort? Before the writer is accused of such misdemeanor, allow this piece to provide a slightly different perspective to our conventional paradigm of thinking – a different window to the world, thinking out of the box.

umno 2009Yes, Umno is indeed passing into twilight. Yes, decades of uninterrupted and total hegemonic grip on power had made Umno so ruthless, unrepentant and remorseless.

After the political tsunami of March 2008, Umno had literally learnt nothing. Talks of reforms were mantras that cajoled and appeased nobody. Another trouncing and thrashing in Permatang Pauh, yet Umno and the BN were still relentless on its devious ways.

Both the Judicial Appointment Commission (JAC) and Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) were dismal and widely perceived as essentially cosmetic to say at best, entrenching further executive power over the judiciary.

**Rampant practices of corruption**

Genuine democratic reforms, clamoured by both the partisan and the civil society at large, never saw the light of the day – of the indelible ink to thwart multiple voting, of the freedom of information critical to voters making informed decisions and an end to the far-from-level playing field.

Our democracy is to be regarded at best as only a quasi-democracy by professors of political science. Kudos Umno and the BN!

Umno is as much synonymous with high-handedness and corruption as the BN government is with downright ineptness. It is now even more widely acknowledged after the declassification in the many seemingly-more-dubious privatisation awards to concessionaires which smack of chronic cronyism and nepotism and surely at the expense of the little-informed-consumers and tax payers.

The Umno/BN government's penchant for questionable multi-billion mega projects, like the undersea cable costing RM9 billion, the HSBB costing RM15.2 billion, the RM12.5 billion double-tracking rail project and bank purchases costing billions in both Indonesia and Pakistan which were in excess of fair market and book prices, continue unabated.

Umno's own rampant practices of corruption in their own backyard in party elections for office bearers are as endemic as ever and if anything had gone bad to worse. The opposition need not say any further as enough have been lamented openly by Umno leaders as they suffer the excruciating pangs of death.

kuala terengganu by election 170109 wahid announcement Given this political backdrop of Umno's 10 months after the tsunami of March 2008, were we surprised by the outcome of the Kuala Terengganu by-election?

To place the entire blame on the inappropriateness of the BN candidate is indeed to remain in denial of Umno's own terminal cancerous state and deflecting blame unto others save of the top leadership.

On hindsight, the BN's candidate could only be attributed blame for saying that the opposition parties were without issues. He was either genuinely ignorant or completely aloof. On both scores he wasn't deserving of contesting in the by-election.

I dare say that had he the courage of standing up to openly admit of Umno's decades of sins of commission to the entire nation and particularly of the greatest crime to the people of Terengganu by abusing and denying their right to the oil royalty, he would have been the saviour of the dying Umno and the BN. But alas, he chose to do the opposite. He was a typical Umno-wannabe-minister. The rest is history.

Be that as it may, is Umno about to be sent to the grave?

### **Understanding coalition politics**

No. Not yet, this writer wishes to assert! Not until the Pakatan Rakyat is fully conscious of what it takes to completely sent Umno/BN into oblivion and send them to the museum as dinosaurs for historical reference and artifact. But that presupposes two conditions.

The first pertains to Umno. If Umno chooses to remain in denial and continues to be stubbornly defiant, then she will be sent straight to the grave in the next GE. That is "the end of the end" of Umno. But that is not for others to decide.

The second condition pertains to the Pakatan Rakyat. Are we actually seeing the "beginning of a beginning" of a New Malaysia? That's for the Pakatan to decide.

Does the Pakatan understand coalition politics? And how to go about fulfilling coalition demands and managing coalition differences?

The four stages of coalition development in the field of "organisational development" still follow that of (a) forming, (b) storming, (c) resolving (norming) and finally (d) performing - each with its attendant teething problems and sometimes very acrimonious ones.

It is the writer's conviction that Pakatan is in the transition stage of forming and storming,

while others may claim that Pakatan is already resolving differences.

Having been personally and emotionally involved in the secretariat for the Barisan Alternative (BA) of the first wave of reformasi, this writer is weary of pitfalls and critical stumbling blocks that lie in the path of the Pakatan. It is as frightening as it is precarious.

Already on many occasions, Pakatan leaders, were seen blissfully shooting at each other's feet. It takes great minds to be thinking out of the box and truly mastering the context of the new scenarios and the new realities.

Leaders from all Pakatan component parties shouldn't allow "overzealous" youth wings and the "conservative " elements of each party to stifle and destroy Pakatan's coalition building exercises. If anything leaders must lead and show the way to embrace coalition politics of a new order, a prerequisite to a New Malaysia.

Future writings will attempt at deliberating the details as the devils are said to be always in the details.

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