

Bittersweet homecoming
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S J Aznan

For well over the last decade I have been abroad, taking my skills where they were needed. But, every year without fail I would return for a short visit to Malaysia, the only place I call home. This year I have returned for good to retire and hopefully to enjoy some peace and prosperity in my homeland.

The Malaysia that I knew has changed much. Physically, the growth has been tremendous. But, more important it is apparent that Malaysia has been swept by the tide of globalisation. Among others, ideological issues of the last decade and the rise of new regional powers seem to influence the way Malaysians think.

Many Malaysians now find new strength to speak out their minds openly on the affairs of the country. Issues on governance and social justice seem to be the main focus, with various groups arguing for their version of an ideal society. Overall, the mood has been largely anti-establishment and the battle cry is for 'change' in the whole system.

But what changes do Malaysians really want? Our forefathers have crafted the present political system as a package based on conditions of the last century. Many argue that it has served its purpose. The contention is that politics based on racial divides is outdated and must be replaced by one based on ideology.

Are Malaysians ready for a new and common ideology? Looking at events in the past few months, it is apparent that many are only united in bringing down the current system, but a practical alternative acceptable to all is still in the making.

Strong voices against corruption and various forms of social injustice are laudable. As a pre-Merdeka born Malaysian, I give my whole-hearted support to these efforts, particularly by the younger generation of Malaysians. The intensity of current efforts along this line must continue if we are to achieve our objective of a better Malaysia.

But, to argue about changing the whole political system would need a more carefully laid out detailed plan. Many of the basics of the current political system are embedded in our constitution, which can only be changed through a very large majority in Parliament.

Unless this is secured then this objective will not be realised. Step one towards this is that those who want a system change should outline and sell their detailed plans in a transparent way. My feeling and hope is that Malaysians will respond positively towards any good idea.

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