

Three different political mindsets
Malaysianmirror.com
04 August 2010

COMMENT Three distinguished figures in the Malaysian politics: Khairy Jamaluddin, Ibrahim Ali and Khalid Abdul Samad, disclosed their respective political stands in a forum not long ago.

The title was: Should ideological politics supersede ethnic politics?

For Perkasa's Ibrahim Ali, these two concepts are hardly distinguishable from each other. His political belief is synonymous with ethnic politics, if he still could claim to have any belief at all.

He feels that under the "special Malaysian context," ethnic politics is indispensable to ensure national security.

And his conclusion is that the Malaysian politics will very much develop along the lines of ethnic politics in the years to come.

His argument triggered ridicules and protests from some of the participants that he had to keep grabbing the microphone to defend his viewpoint.

Khalid Abdul Samad, the liberalist in PAS, holds a completely opposite stand.

He believes that Malaysian politics must be established upon the foundation of racial equality where ethnically oriented interventions are unacceptable.

He rejects Ketuanan Melayu, believing that all national issues must be viewed from macroscopic perspectives.

To Khalid, ethnic politics is a thing of the past that will not have a future at all.

His viewpoint drew him the applause from mentally progressive students.

As for Khairy Jamaluddin, he is finding his place between reality and ideals.

While he believes ideological politics should take the place of ethnic politics, he also agrees that majority of Malays are still unable to forego their ethnic mindset nor the privileges endowed upon them. To him, protective measures are still necessary, but there is a need for the Malays to keep improving themselves and not to chronically depend on the government for assistance.

Khairy's more moderate stand won him some valuable recognition from the audience.

These three different political expressions reflect the three different political mindsets currently in existence in the Malay society.

Ibrahim Ali personifies feudal conservatism; Khalid Samad represents the romantic idealism while Khairy Jamaluddin an advocate of compromised pragmatism.

If we were to gauge these people on a simple political spectrum, then Ibrahim Ali is unmistakably a rightist, Khalid Samad a leftist and Khairy Jamaluddin a centrist.

They are no political heavyweights, but the three different mindsets they have expressed have found their own grounds for survival and are mutually competing in the Malay society.

And these three different mindsets have transcended partisan boundaries and can be traced overlapping in Umno, PAS and PKR.

For instance, there are many in Umno who sympathise with Ibrahim Ali, while some agree to Khairy's viewpoints and others support Najib's reform agenda.

Even as idealism has found a place in PAS, conservative voices are still heard right in the core of the party leadership as well as the grassroots.

PKR, meanwhile, is still wandering between political reality and ideals in search of an ideological ground that will mete out its continued survival.

Whichever school of thought with the largest following will triumph in the rivalry, and through the power of political parties eventually become the dominant force in Malay politics. - MySinChew.com

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