

**Najib's lip service about brain-drain**  
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COMMENT Najib Abdul Razak addressed 250 Malaysians in Brussels and said: 'Malaysia is going through an exciting time. . . We are now turning the bend and going the final stretch towards the year of reckoning ... to become a developed nation by the year 2020'.

I beg to differ, Mr. Prime Minister. Malaysia is NOT going through an exciting time; Malaysians are experiencing a thoroughly depressing time.

Why wait till 2020? The year of reckoning will come sooner. It is at the next General Election (GE-13). But the important time is now.

Now, is when we Malaysians must decide if we want to reclaim the country as ours and not just for a select group of people.

Now, is when we have to think of all those things that we hold dear, like education, civil service jobs, promotion, housing, contracts, transparency, freedom to worship (including for the Malays), freedom of expression which Malaysians who study abroad take for granted.

The PM added that "A society that is closed up will not attract the best brains; it will attract mediocre people and the good ones would have left the country, and we will be a lot poorer as a result."

The PM is right. A closed society will self-destruct. The good Malaysians abandoned Malaysia ages ago, and the trend is worsening. The Malaysia Najib inherited and which we have to endure is a Malaysia that has been milked for all it is worth by members of BN, principally Umno.

Decades of warped policies have reduced us to this sorry state. Those who dared say something then, were silenced. Many simply stayed away.

The Umno elite have plundered the nation, when they should have treated it as a sapling and nurtured it to maturity. They profited from its natural resources and exploited its other most important resource – its people

If Najib fails to realise that it is his government's policies that are repelling people (Malays included), then he is not fit to govern.

If he cannot understand that members of his Cabinet and a sizeable percentage of his civil service do not support his lofty ideals, then he should nominate people who do, or else hand over the reins to a party or group of people who desires a successful Malaysia which does not differentiate between the races and religions.

Maybe it is Najib who is at fault for dithering between a Malaysia for all Malaysians or to keep Malaysia exclusively for the Malays?

What is Talent Corporation? Which Umno elite was given the generous funds to start it? How much of taxpayers' money was used for its formation? How do they propose 'seeking out' overseas professionals? Few Malaysians register at the High Commission.

There is no point attracting the best brains when the conditions are less than ideal for the families. For some, money may not be the prime mover. These professionals care about their children's education too. They will not have a repeat performance of the prejudices and hardship that they endured, when they left to study. Sort out the injustices at home, and they will return.

One Malay doctor, a government scholar in the United Kingdom, is staying put. If she were to return, she has been told to start at the bottom of the rung. We have lost another cardiologist and possibly the RM 1.5 million that funded her education. She is one of several.

Another friend, a physiotherapist, has expertise in 'special needs children', with decades of experience in British hospitals. When she first heard about the scheme to attract professionals home, she actually sought out the Malaysian authorities and expressed a desire to return. It is over a year and the government has not responded. She is returning to London.

Najib said, "Previously, we waited for them to get back to us but this time we will seek them out. We will find out what it takes for them to consider going back home and at the same time create more business opportunities and pay them wages that are more aligned with the global wages."

The physiotherapist friend took the initiative, but did the authorities act on it?

Maybe Malaysia does not need physiotherapists? Maybe the message from our PM rarely filters down to the bureaucrats? Maybe our ministers pay lip-service only, to what they tell us? Maybe the left hand does not know what the right hand is up to?

My two nieces – one a civil engineer and the other an accountant - were offered permanent jobs in Australia after graduation, last year. Even their parents have advised them to make Australia their 'home'. So much for DPM Muhyiddin Yassin's assurance that the Malays' perks and privileges are protected in the New Economic Model.

Young, knowledgeable Malays are abandoning the NEM. When will the others open their eyes?

Najib also said: "Some of you might think about coming back home, and some of you who are married to Belgians, you can bring your spouses with you and they will be allowed to work."

Unless the immigration authorities have been alerted about this, nothing will have changed.

For decades, thousands of spouses with professional qualifications or valuable experience in the various fields such as engineers, teachers, doctors, scientists and the arts, were treated like idiots in the immigration offices.

What man or woman, with integrity is prepared to tolerate a social visit pass for 3 months maximum to stay in the country? Some marriages failed because of our immigration policies.

Not so, the sons- or daughters-in-laws of high ranking politicians who manage to manipulate the system so that these foreigners can work and stay in Malaysia.

But the country has wasted the energy and the goodwill of several Malaysians in the past. It would take more than just sweet words to entice them back to Malaysia.

Najib cannot ignore the corruption of its various institutions – the police, the judiciary and the various government departments. How will he deal with this when Malaysia's own anti-corruption agency, (MACC) is itself compromised?

The PM talked about creating 'business opportunities'. A businessman told me of his frustrations doing business in Malaysia. To form the business is easy – it is done within days. To get the various permits is eye-wateringly slow. What he achieved in 6 weeks in America, took him over 9 months in Malaysia. He's long gone.

Malaysia wants to woo the professionals from abroad despite its racial and religious undertones. So, tell me why some ministers children prefer to work in the City of London rather than return home? Are they not convinced by their fathers' sweet talk or are we more gullible?

Sometimes, the devil is in the detail.

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