

**Najib needs to preserve and promote the line of balance**  
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COMMENT There are few nationalist political parties left in the world today.

In an era with no intrusion and occupation by colonial powers, nationalism has lost its relevance in the battle for sovereign nationhood.

Today, passers-by would think it a film shooting if they see people in full ancient armour walking in Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur. They would wonder whether these people have come to the modern world from ancient times through a time tunnel.

Of course, these armed warriors should not simply pick any passer-by to duel with them. They will scare everyone.

Nationalist political parties in many countries have changed with times and transformed into modern parties after accomplishing their historical missions.

For example, the Kuomintang of China no longer shouts slogans calling for the rise of the Chinese people; the Indian National Congress (INC) no longer resists Western empires; and the African National Congress (ANC) no longer confronts apartheid.

They have walked out from history, took off their national costumes and replaced them with suits. They have transformed into modern parties that know how to manage their countries and regions well, and they have become competent governments that are respected in the international community.

Similarly, Umno, the most successful nationalist political party of the region, should also change with times. Umno has ruled for more than half a century and it should now walk out from its own shadow to find a new position.

Undoubtedly, Umno is unable to give up nationalism, but it must at least get rid of communalism.

The speech given by Umno president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak during last week's party general assembly must have been well-pondered. The speech should represent his ideologies and the direction he wants Umno to take.

First, Umno must be an inclusive political party.

Most nationalist political parties will resist and exclude others to highlight their struggling roles in the early stage. But when they gradually reach a mature stage, they should reduce resistance and exclusivity, and replace them with open liberal leadership and inclusivity.

Whether Umno can be more inclusive depends on its attitude towards the disadvantaged and minority groups in the society. If it can create national wealth with openness, fairly manage national resources, and treat other racial groups impartially, its inclusiveness will then be demonstrated.

Secondly, Umno must eliminate the sense of insecurity among racial groups to resolve social conflicts.

Najib has stressed that everyone must abide by the social contract. He has also reiterated the spirit of the Federal Constitution.

He said that the special status of Malays is protected by the Federal Constitution and cannot be disputed. The rights of other racial groups are also guaranteed.

On one hand, he has to dissolve the right wing of the Malay community, such as Malay rights group Perkasa which has created a sense of insecurity in the Malay community, and fear among the non-Malays. On the other hand, he also has to tell non-Malays not to cross the original line of balance.

The line of balance has been the moat of the BN from the past to the present. The BN has to hold the line and draw the middle power to stabilize its rule.

However, with the provocation from the right wing and the attack of the liberal left wing, the line of balance is being shifted.

Umno has chosen to return to the original safe zone with an attempt to put an end to the threats from both wings.

While Najib is taking the moderate path and trying to gain support from party members, he must also persuade the Malay and non-Malay racial groups to regain their acceptance, so that he can win the next general election and continue being the master of Putrajaya.

And Najib must also take diverse political landscapes and the rise of civic consciousness into account. — *mysinchew.com*

\* The views expressed herein are those of the writer and do not necessarily represent the views of Malaysian Mirror and/or its associates.

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