

Was It A Big Fat Lie, Mr PM?
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Was Anwar's bid to takeover Putrajaya on 16 September 2008 a "big fat lie" as Najib has claimed? P Ramakrishnan reminds us about a certain trip to Taiwan.

Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak was reported by The Sunday Star (20 March 2011) as having said that PKR had gone to the extent of telling the 'biggest political lie of the century' when it announced it would take over the government on 16 September 2008.

"We have to keep repeating this because human memory is short and they forget, but we must remind the people that it was the biggest political lie of the century," he said.

He said PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim had made the Barisan Nasional worried when he claimed that more than 30 of the coalition's elected representatives would cross over,

"But in the end, it was all a big fat lie" he added.

I must thank the PM for jogging my memory. The only truth in his statement was that "Anwar Ibrahim had made the Barisan Nasional worried when he claimed that more than 30 of the coalition's elected representatives would cross over". That was a fact.

The rest of Najib's claims about what transpired cannot be said to be the "biggest political lie of the century". They are Najib's claims of what happened and they are his lies.

Again, Najib is correct in stating, "We have to keep repeating this because human memory is short and they forget..." Indeed we have to repeat the past incidents and recall what actually happened so that people can remember the truth.

If the cross over on 16 September 2008 was deemed to be a lie, why did the BN take this lie so seriously by sending some 50 MPs to Taiwan? They were sent, we were then told, on an agricultural tour of Taiwan. But the truth was that the BN was running scared of the possibility of its own MPs switching sides. It did not trust its MPs absolutely.

That was the only reason why the BN wanted to keep these 50-over MPs away from Malaysia. It desperately wanted them to be away from Anwar who was trying to entice some 30 over BN MPs to defect to his side in his campaign to unseat the BN government.

The BN knew that there was this real possibility that its MPs could have provided Anwar the majority that was required to topple the BN government.

There was no other convincing reason why these MPs had to be kept away from Malaysia on 16 September. They could have been sent to Taiwan or to Timbuktu on any other date for whatever course but the BN wasn't prepared to take any chances by keeping them in Malaysia on 16 September!

So on 8 September – 8 days before 16 September – these MPs were packed off to Taiwan on a "blur blur" tour. One BN MP mentioned that this trip was planned months ago while another contradicted him by claiming it was all so sudden!

Lim Kit Siang alluded to this as "a national shame that BN MPs should be treated like delinquent children who have to be packed off overseas and secluded from mischief, treating BN MPs as no better than chattel. Poor BN MPs!"

John Roberts in an article entitled, "Political power struggle in Malaysia continues unabated" had this to say: In the lead up to September 16, the government took the extraordinary step of sending nearly 50 BN parliamentarians on a paid trip to Taiwan to study farming techniques. Few believe that farming issues were the reason behind the trip. Among those sent were parliamentarians regarded as most susceptible to being courted by the opposition.

PKR secretary general Salehuddin Hashim described the expedition as "kidnapping," saying it was "a very clear sign of the anxieties and insecurities inside Barisan".

If the BN had not taken this extraordinary precaution by sending its own MPs away to Taiwan, and on 16 September if Anwar's bid for power had failed, only then Najib could boast that "it was all a big fat lie".

Since the BN did not dare take that chance to test the integrity of its own MPs, Najib's story is nothing but a "big fat lie".

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