

**Najib And Cabinet Are Trapped In A 'Time Warp'**  
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One explanation for the hamfisted and gross mishandling of the 709 Bersih 2.0 rally for free and fair elections in Merdeka Stadium is that the Prime Minister, Najib Razak, Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, the Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein and all the Cabinet Ministers are trapped in a "time warp" causing their total disconnect with ordinary Malaysians and the fact that they are living in 2011 in the era of social media and the Internet.

This is why there is considerable merit in the advice by the University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) social anthropologist Professor Shamsul Amri Baharuddin that the Najib administration should discard its "Cold War" mindset and to modernize its concepts to address internal security and national issues.

Shamsul reminded the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition that the "enemy" was no longer armed communists battling a jungle war but a civilian movement consisting of politically awakened middle class that is wired to the global community and moved by fully legitimate issues based on the Malaysian Constitution such as free and fair elections; human rights of freedom of assembly and association; integrity, good, clean and incorruptible governance!

If Najib and Hishammuddin had acted on Shamsul's advice, the country would have been spared the farce, idiocy and agony of a "Cold War" response to the Bersih 2.0 call for free and fair elections – with the police and the national security apparatus fully mobilized nationally against the citizenry to fight ghosts and imaginary non-existing enemies of "revived communism", "war against the Agong", "Christian Malaysia", "foreign-power interference" and "another May 13"!

It is truly sad and pathetic that despite the gross mishandling of the 709 Bersih 2 rally which has plunged the Najib administration into a new nadir point of public trust and confidence, the Prime Minister and his Cabinet do not seem to be ready at any time to get out of the "time warp" and reconnect with Berseh 1Malaysia generation who came of age last Saturday on July 9 despite massive police threats, mass arrests, tear gas and water cannons, and these negative signs are aplenty.

Former Prime Minister, Abdullah today admitted that Najib administration's image could be affected by the Bersih rally, but said he was confident the government would be able to repair it in no time.

Abdullah is no authority on governments regaining lost public confidence and I do not think Najib would be asking for any advice for general election strategy from Abdullah, who slumped from biggest electoral mandate to worst election debacle for the ruling coalition in a matter one term of five years, putting paid to his premiership as well.

If the Najib administration is seeking to come out of the "time warp" to re-connect with the Bersih 1Malaysia generation, it would not have exhibited very advanced stages of denial syndrome after July 9 – with the Home Minister and Inspector-General of Police competing as to who could win the competition to hide their head in the sand!

What is worse, the craziness of the double phobia of xanthophobia (fear of yellow) and Bersih-phobia are still in full swing – with first arrest in Sabah for wearing yellow Bersih

T-shirt yesterday.

There is in fact no sign of awareness or remorse whatsoever that the Barisan Nasional had grossly miscalculated and mishandled the 709 Bersih 2.0 rally, creating the worst crisis of confidence for the Najib premiership in 27 months!

How else could one explain the obstinate refusal to admit responsibility for the instances of police excesses, violence and brutality during the Bersih 2.0 rally, as in causing the death of Baharuddin Ahmad, the criminal police landrover ramming of PAS Deputy President Mat Sabu on motor-bike or the wanton and reckless firing of tear gas and water cannons into Tung Shin Hospital and directly at Bersih and Pakatan Rakyat leaders at KL Sentral tunnel?

If the Barisan Nasional Government does not get out of the "time warp" it has locked itself into and reconnect with the new Bersih 1Malaysia generation operating in a vibrant social media, then the days of both the Najib premiership and Barisan Nasional ruling coalition are numbered.

They will be left behind by the Bersih 1Malaysia generation as utterly irrelevant belonging to the outdated "Cold War" past that is not prepared to keep abreast of changing times.

Malaysians had been threatened with another May 13 if the 709 Bersih 2.0 rally for free and fair elections was held. But there was not only no May 13, Malaysians of all races, religions, regions, gender and ages found a new spirit of Malaysian oneness best described by a young Malaysian Kenny Chang who had earlier hesitated whether to join in the 709 Bersih rally or not: "There are certainly no Bodoh Melayu, Babi Cina or India Keling feeling there anymore. Race issues are never there, they have forgotten we are multiracial multilingual country. We are just a simple word 'Malaysian'".

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