

Hudud Will Put Pakatan Pretense Out Of Joint
MalaysianMirror.com
September 25,2011

Recently Prime Minister Najib Razak knocked the wind out of the opposition sails with his surprise announcement that the ISA is to be repealed.

Earlier, PAS did the same when their last muktamar (general assembly) changed tack in steering the party away from its long-held Islamic State aspiration to the rather ambiguous 'Welfare State' terminology.

Detractors of PAS were left flummoxed at this pulling the rug out from under the feet of critics.

But if you thought the Islamic State ghost had been laid to rest by the rise of the so-called professionals faction - dubbed the Erdogans -just as suddenly it is resurrected. Kelantan Menteri Besar Nik Aziz Nik Mat has again brought up his state government's intention to implement hudud.

This development puts the Pakatan Rakyat electoral pact in a most untimely quandary.

They claim to have drafted a 'common policy framework' in which a contentious issue the nature of hudud requires group consensus.

However with Anwar Ibrahim coming out in support of Nik Aziz's move and his party PKR invoking qazaf (slandorous accusation) in the case of the Datuk T-released sex video which falls under the ambit of hudud and hence can be extrapolated as PKR invoking hudud, DAP is therefore pushed into a tight corner, outnumbered 2 to 1.

Party stalwarts Karpal Singh and Lim Kit Siang may appear to be sticking to their guns in opposing their coalition partners on this. However, in reality there is the old guard DAP and the DAP 2.0, the latter incarnation coming into being after the party's unexpected gains in the last general election.

The 2.0 newbies in their vocal public agitations have been taking the broom to ideas and individuals they consider to be behind the times and not in keeping with the party rebranding as 'colour blind' (self-identification by ethnicity such as that done by Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddn Yassin is considered by the latter-day DAP as being 'racist').

Aside from the flaws in eschewing race identification, DAP has been making believe that our religious distinctions too can be flattened out, quite forgetting the federal constitution's Article 3 on Islam as the religion of the federation.

Despite all the public relations exercise conducted in churches and friendly mosques, it remains difficult to reconcile the two strange bedfellows DAP and PAS that are temporarily bound together in unholy matrimony.

Hudud is one of the sticking points in their marriage of inconvenience. DAP's archrival MCA has correctly called on the supposedly secular party to clarify its stand on the Islamic law prescribing mandatory punishment (which is what hudud is).

Nonetheless veterans Karpal or Kit Siang cautioning against hudud is not enough as neither belongs ostensibly to the top power hierarchy.

One is the party chairman which is a window dressing post whereas the other holds an official designation - Chairman of the Central Policy and Strategic Planning Commission - that sounds like a quango created to coddle a former politburo strongman who has been put to pasture.

It is not Karpal and Lim Sr but instead Lim Guan Eng as DAP secretary-general who must be called upon to state his party's explicit stance on hudud. Given Lim Jr's penchant for posturing as a modern-day Caliph Umar Abdul Aziz, it would indeed be gratifying to hear his take on the applicability here of hudud.

Meanwhile, the DAP 2.0 young ideologues have been chafing at the bit and complaining about the 'outdated' approach adopted at times by the old warhorses, for example Karpal's infamous "over my dead body" declaration and Lim's niggling opposition to the songkok.

For instance in earlier days, Kit Siang had held that tudung as a compulsory element enforced on non-Muslims "is just not acceptable" while imposing the songkok is an act of "insensitivity" that usurps the middle ground of cultural plurality. He'd made these statements in 2005 and 2008 respectively but of course, today things are apparently different with DAP.

Blogosphere, including my own blog at Wordpress, have carried photographs of DAP Subang Jaya state assemblywoman Hannah Yeoh wearing tudung on several occasions and DAP Pandamaran state assemblyman Ronnie Liu donning the songkok too.

In fact, Ronnie went so far as to print Hari Raya greetings portraying him in a baju Melayu and songkok, and the posters plastered around town.

Now the thing is this. Some political pundits, including the Johnny-Come-Lately's in their own party consider Karpal and Kit Siang to be museum pieces already. Hannah Yeoh, Tony Pua and other more telegenic politicians are touted as the 'Faces of Putrajaya Future'.

Hannah just so happens to be every now and then photographed in tudung, doubtless the photo ops a bid to win over Malay voters. If the DAP 'Malaysian First' advocates can be called political animals, then these ones slipping into the green skin (Islamic dress code putting Dewan Muslimat in the shade) are assuredly of the chameleon species.

Yet there is surely even a limit to how far an opportunistic politician should go in choosing to pander, sugarcoating the picture of what the audience wishes to see and hear. The photo of Hannah Yeoh in her tudung surrounded by Makciks in similar apparel is striking for its visual impact. Looking at it makes one wonder how she'll wriggle out of admitting her party stand.

After all, Hannah and her chameleon friends of the Selendang Squad (fellow non-Muslim Pakatan politicians wearing tudung to please Malays) have, with political calculation, made-over themselves to outwardly resemble Muslim women for purposes of vote fishing. Garbed like that, can they then look their interlocutors in the eye and say "we oppose hudud"?

The PAS reversion again and again to hudud shows the party's consistency, tenacity and sincerity to their principles.

DAP bending this way and that according to expediency only shows the chameleon party's duplicity.

Opposition supporters deserve to hear from the horse's mouth of 'Caliph' Lim and his tudung-wearing subordinates (national and state representatives the likes of Teo Nie Ching and Hannah Yeoh) their party's clear stand on hudud so that everyone is aware what they're in for when they cast their votes.

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