

Mahathir The Uniting Factor

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We have been mistaken into believing that former Prime minister Mahathir Mohamad exploited the politics of division, using race and religion, to divide and rule us.

On the contrary, every right minded, decent Malaysian who believes in the rule of law, of equality and justice, is united in their loathing of a man who despite being retired, appears to keep a tight grip on this government, from behind the scenes.

Throughout his 22-year rule, Mahathir sought to divide and conquer. Perhaps, now as he nears death, he is displaying pangs of guilt, because he realises that he accomplished very little and did not unite the country.

Last month, Mahathir told us that in the next 10 years, the Malays would lose their power in the country unless they became united now. He described the Malay community as being split into different factions thus making them lose their advantage as the majority group.

Then, using religion as the mainstay for his argument warned the Malays: "The minority cannot rule the country in a democratic framework, under which the majority rules".

Mahathir made the remarks at the launching of the Ummah Unity and Economy Seminar organised by the Malaysia Islamic Welfare Organisation (Perkim) and Malay Chamber of Commerce.

The former PM who is also the Perkim president, warned that Muslims in Malaysia had not been taught the importance of "uniting when they were young". He urged Malays to work hard and reap rewards instead of looking forward to receiving "free things". He explained that some of the poorest communities in the nation were made up of Muslims and he urged them to work hard to be financially stable.

When Mahathir said that the Malays would lose power, he was partly right.

But he left out one important detail. He omitted to say that it would be the Malays at the top of Umno who would lose power if Umno/BN were to lose GE-13.

Who would have the most to lose if BN were to be defeated in GE-13?

It would be Mahathir and all those whom he has groomed to do his bidding when he officially left office. It would also be his cronies who gobbled up the contracts and tenders for multi-billion ringgit business deals.

At the moment, all those who received his selective patronage are indebted to him and fear him because he could reveal sordid details about their illegal activities.

Hence, if the opposition were to gain control of Putrajaya, Mahathir and all his cronies would be investigated. Age is no barrier as ex-President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt found to his cost.

Money in exchange for freedom means nothing to the man in the street who has lived on very little or nothing. This is what Libya's Gaddafi discovered when he tried to trade his life for money.

If anyone doubts the fear and insecurity that the current BN regime has about losing GE-13, then they are blind or in denial.

Recent allegations of vote rigging, of tampering at the polls and of sneaking in millions of voters through the back-door are alarming enough.

Instead of resolving these issues, Umno/BN orchestrated a series of time-wasting measures to distract the rakyat from the true extent of the cheating that it is prepared to undertake.

These involved prolonging the Sodomy II trial of the opposition leader, Anwar Ibrahim in a malicious effort to persuade the rakyat that the leader of the opposition is a tainted man.

More sex videos of Anwar have since appeared, and for a while, those who were plotting against Anwar could not decide to make him a homosexual or a serial philanderer. Now, it seems that some fresh charges have been trumped-up against Anwar.

Other distractions include the perfectly timed appearance of Umami Hafilda and accusations that members of the opposition were communist sympathisers.

Under the guise of Islam as a uniting force, Mahathir thought nothing of using the religion to foment the Malay hatred of those who were non-Malay and non-Muslim. It was after all Mahathir who engineered the Sodomy I trial choosing the sodomy act, which he knew would make the rural Malays despise Anwar.

It was Mahathir who Islamicised the country when he felt that PAS was gaining more support than Umno.

And it was also Mahathir who curbed the powers of the sultans, the so-called defenders of the faith, in an effort to control them.

Has Mahathir finally realised that his policies of preferential rewards for the Malays have made them more backward than ever? Did he suddenly realise that Malays are less motivated because they know the government will bail them out? And has he been notified that the treasury is not a bottomless pit and cannot keep handing out money, scholarships, tenders and civil service jobs to the Malays?

Mahathir has united us in more ways than one. Parents, who are demanding that their children be taught in English, will recall that Mahathir and his children were once a product of an education that had its roots steeped in English.

They denounce Mahathir for dismantling Malaysia's sound education because he wanted to cater only to Malay nationalism.

Now the hypocrite Mahathir seems to support those parents because the country is lagging behind the region and cannot achieve developed nation status by 2020.

Those who desire further evidence of being alienated need only ask the Sabahans what it feels like to be a minority in their own country.

The danger is that with Umno/BN intent on winning the polls by whatever means, more foreigners will be brought in.

So when Mahathir told the Malays that they would lose power in the next 10 years, was he warning us that certain components in BN were trading citizenships for votes from the migrant communities of Bangladesh, Myanmar, the Philippines and Indonesia?

Mahathir's analysis is correct. The Malays, who are currently perceived to be the majority race, will soon become a minority. But then he has only his party, Umno/BN to blame. At the rate we are going, we might be a province of Indonesia by 2020.

Mahathir's legacy is one of division, destruction and disappointment.

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