

The Existence Of 42,051 Doubtful Voters - Trivial?

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I find it rather perplexing to find BN MPs queuing up in gusto arguing on the side of the Election Commission based merely on flimsy presumptions that it is fair. Their reasoning does not seem to correlate with the reality on the ground and their mental capacity or intelligence which is indicated in their degrees or PhDs, leaves much to be desired.

How could the Election Commission chairman Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof in a recent press conference assert that the registry is clean even with the existence of 42,051 "doubtful voters"? Ridiculously this assertion found endorsement from UMNO and BN. More disturbing to the common rakyat is that it actually comes from the so-called intellectual elites of UMNO.

One must bear in mind that the primary duty of the Election Commission is to upkeep the electoral roll so that it is clean and free from doubt. If elections are refereed based on this doubtful electoral roll then, legitimacy of the newly elected government will be in question. Should this situation occur, the EC should be brought to task by not only by MPs and SAs from the government or the opposition, but most importantly from the rakyat.

If the "doubtful" 42,051 voters "manage" to vote in the 13th General Election, it could influence up to 42 parliamentary and state seats with a 1,000 votes majority. If it is a 300 vote majority, it could influence up to 140 seats.

Thus, we cannot downplay the significant role played by a small number of voters and it should not be taken lightly!

For an example, in the 1964 British General Elections, "if a total of 350 Labour voters had stayed home in 5 constituencies (Brighton, Kemptown, Wellingborough, King's Lynn and Colne Valley) Labour would not have recaptured power after an interval of 13 years in opposition". (1)

The 1750 votes seemed trivial but without them, the Labour would not have been voted into power and perhaps carried out one of the most important and enduring new policy that was to put an end to Britain's leading role in the World stage - the British withdrawal from the East of Suez (Persian Gulf, Malaysia and Singapore 1964-1968). Without the 1750 votes the withdrawal would not have happened!

Finally, the Election Commission established under Article 114 of the Federal Constitution is appointed by the Yang di Pertuan Agong after consultation with the Conference of Rulers. And in appointing its members the Yang diPertuan Agong shall have regard to the importance of securing an Election Commission which enjoys public confidence.

The Election Commission is entrusted with the job of conducting voters registration exercises, redelineation of constituencies exercise and the general elections. Their duties and responsibilities must be carried out in the true spirit of democracy.

Since the EC is the sole body responsible for all matters connected with elections, it must be an all powerful body which should not bow to the dictates of the Prime Minister or the Executive. It should, by its actions, show that it is an independent body.

But the manner in which the Election Commission had conducted itself over the years leaves one to wonder whether the Commission enjoys public confidence or regards itself as independent.

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Reference

1) Peter Harris, Foundation of Political Science, Prentice Hall Simon & Schuster (Asia) Pte. Ltd.(1997)

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