

**Produce Proof Or Apologise**  
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**By Lim Kit Siang**

The Prime Minister, Najib Razak has belatedly realized that he is losing out in the public relations war over the government's mishandling of the Bersih 3.0 "sit-in" at Dataran Merdeka on April 28, 2012, as evidenced by the following recent developments:

- Najib upping the ante in the public relations battle with his wild and irresponsible allegation in Gua Musang on Friday that the Bersih 3.0 rally was a coup attempt by the Opposition to topple the government;
- the desperate roping in of three former Inspector-Generals of Police , Haniff Omar, Rahim Noor and Musa Hassan to lend credence to Najib's wild claim although there is not one iota of evidence that Bersih 3.0 was a coup attempt by the Opposition to topple the government (in fact, all evidence point to the contrary, with hundreds of thousands of Malaysians regardless of race, religion, class, region, age or gender gathering peacefully in the best manifestation of "1Malaysia" for a common cause for clean elections and armed at most with salt and water bottles to protect themselves from tear-gas attacks);
- The recycling of the Economist commentary "It's that time of year" in the local media almost a week after its first appearance on the Economist website on May 1.

One lesson Najib's "image" handlers have learnt from the government's disastrous mishandling of the Bersih 2.0 rally of July 9, 2011 was to better manage the foreign media – and as a result, the Najib administration had a better foreign media perception and coverage on the night of Bersih 3.0 as compared to the night of Bersih 2.0, as illustrated by the Economist commentary of 1st May.

But with every passing day, this better foreign media perception of Najib's handling of Bersih 3.0 as compared to Bersih 2.0 is coming apart.

I had predicted a week after "428" that Bersih 3.0 is even greater public relations disaster for Najib than Bersih 2.0, with damage growing in magnitude and impact when all the horror stories of police rampage of violence and brutality are told – and I am proven right.

Najib should realize that the public relations war, whether inside the country or internationally, over Bersih 3.0 cannot be won by more wild and scurrilous attacks on Bersih organisers and Pakatan Rakyat leaders.

Who gave Najib the "information" that Bersih 3.0 was a coup attempt by the Opposition to topple the government? Such information can only come from the police.

But what has the Inspector-General of Police Ismail Omar got to say about the Prime Minister's allegation? Ismail was reported by Bernama in Kulim yesterday as saying that the police are investigating Najib's claims that Bersih 3.0 was a purported coup d'état attempt.

Here we have come full circle – the Prime Minister alleging that Bersih 3.0 was an attempted coup d'état against the government (which information could have only come from the police) with the police responding by announcing that the Prime Minister's allegation is being investigated.

Can there be another episode to illustrate how reckless and irresponsible the Prime Minister could

descend to – making the most baseless allegation as well as the blind chorus of support given by current and former IGPs, greatly dishonouring the reputation and professionalism of police officers, both currently in service as well as those who have retired?

Najib must not be so irresponsible as Prime Minister of Malaysia. He should either produce proof or retract and apologise for his wild allegation that Bersih 3.0 "sit-in" was a coup attempt by the Opposition to topple the government.

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