

Cabinet Should Initiate All-Party Conference

MalaysianMirror.com

29 May 2012

By Lim Kit Siang

The Prime Minister, Najib Razak is at it again – making sweet-sounding high falutin speeches at international forums but doing the very opposite in the country.

Addressing the 26th Asia Pacific roundtable last night, Najib called on Asian countries to reject the use of force and violence in resolving conflicts.

What struck Malaysians is not his call on Asian countries to reject the use of force and violence in resolving conflicts, but his conspicuous silence and his government's failure in the past month to stand up and be counted to condemn and dissociate themselves from a new political culture of aggression, thuggery and violence disrupting Pakatan Rakyat functions and activities.

As a result, Malaysians are reminded of his other sweet-sounding speeches at international forums calling for a Global Movement of Moderates to unite against extremists, but inside the country, his three-year premiership has seen the unprecedented manifestation of extremism not only officially sanctioned but carried out with impunity and immunity when laws of the land are violated.

The latest incident of growing political culture of aggression, thuggery and violence was the disruption of the Pakatan Rakyat ceramah in Lembah Pantai last Thursday, and other recent incidents include the vandalism and thuggery at the PAS ceramah in Kampung Sayong Lembah, Kuala Kangsar; the high-tea event in Merlimau, Malacca to feature Bersih 2.0 co-chairperson Ambiga Sreenivasan; the campaign of intimidation to violate the privacy of Ambiga outside her house at Bukit Damansara, Kuala Lumpur and the Perkasa "funeral rite" in front of Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng's house in Penang.

All Malaysians are struck by Najib's glaring and prolonged silence on the escalation of incidents of aggression, thuggery and violence particularly at Pakatan Rakyat events and functions which made his call last night to Asian countries to reject the use of force and violence in resolving conflicts sounds so hollow.

The question Malaysians are asking is whether Najib is prepared to walk the talk and renounce the use of force and violence in resolving conflicts in the country, and in particular, to retract his "crushed bodies, lives lost" declaration in his speech at the 2010 UMNO General Assembly to defend UMNO power at all costs in Putrajaya as well as a pledge to accept the verdict of the Malaysian voters in the next general election including a peaceful transition of federal power from Barisan Nasional to Pakatan Rakyat?

The Cabinet meeting tomorrow will provide Najib with the opportunity to prove that he is not making sweet-sounding high falutin speeches at international forums but doing the very opposite in the country by specifically speaking out clearly against the political culture of aggression, thuggery and violence.

An independent, impartial and credible Election Commission should be convening a Roundtable Conference of Political Parties to check the political culture of aggression, thuggery and violence as such incidents will undermine the holding of any free, fair and clean election in the forthcoming 13th General Election.

This, unfortunately, is not a feasible proposition as the Election Commission has lost public confidence and credibility as an independent and impartial body which could be trusted to carry out its constitutional mandate to conduct free, fair and clean elections, and this is why the sixth of the Eight Demands of Bersih 2.0 is "Strengthen Public Institutions".

Recently, the Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin claimed that the government already agreed to implement seven out of Bersih 2.0's eight demands, but this was immediately rebutted by Bersih 2.0

which said that the government was only acting on one of its Eight Demands.

On its sixth demand on "Strengthening Public Institutions", this was Bersih 2.0's response in its statement dated 24th May 2012:

"6. Strengthening Public Institutions

"The situation with respect to this has in fact deteriorated, with the controversy surrounding the membership of UMNO by both the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the EC still unresolved. In addition, there are comments by the Deputy Chairperson of the EC to the effect that he still considers himself a 'government servant', which implies he is still obedient to the will and instructions by government. This is contrary to his position as a member of the EC, which should be independent of government.

"This begs the question: If the EC has failed to perform its most basic duty of managing and protecting the integrity of the electoral roll, how can the EC still be entrusted to implement major and crucial reforms for the electoral system? The EC has proven that it is not independent and no longer commands public confidence. The EC must resign immediately and be replaced by new members who command public confidence."

In these circumstances where the Election Commission cannot be expected to be the independent and impartial body entrusted with the duty to conduct free, fair and clean elections, the Cabinet tomorrow should take the decision to convene an All-Party Roundtable Conference to nip in the bud the rise in the political culture of aggression, thuggery and violence which if left unchecked, will mar the holding of free, fair and clean election.

DAP and Pakatan Rakyat are prepared to fully play our role to eliminate the political culture of aggression, thuggery and violence.

The question is whether UMNO and Barisan Nasional parties are equally committed to the peaceful democratic and constitutional process as to make an All-Party Roundtable Conference to end the politics of aggression, thuggery and violence a success.

LIM KIT SIANG

(The views expressed above belongs to the author in its entirety and does not represent the opinion of Malaysian Mirror in any way)

Copyright © 2012 www.malaysianmirror.com
<http://www.malaysianmirror.com/media-buzz-detail/6-nation/57840>