

## **Electoral Arithmetic Rules Out Chinese Voters As 'Kingmakers'**

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**By Lim Kit Siang**

Former Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad seems to have reverted to his early years in politics when, to use his own words, he was fighting for the Malay cause per se when he was young and his thoughts were that of an inexperienced politician.

Mahathir made this open admission in a dialogue with the Malaysian Student Executive Council of the United Kingdom in September 1995, when making the case for a Malaysian rather than a Malay approach, arguing that to realize the goal of Bangsa Malaysia, Malaysians should start accepting each other as they are regardless of race or religion.

This was the fourth year of his promulgation of Vision 2020 and Bangsa Malaysia in February 1991.

Now Mahathir seemed to have gone full circle, repudiating not only Bangsa Malaysia and Vision 2020, but fighting only for Malay rather than Malaysian cause.

On Friday, the Prime Minister, Najib Razak called on Barisan Nasional members not to make statements that will hurt the feelings of other races or BN component parties.

But how many in UMNO will listen to Najib?

Mahathir is in the forefront among those who have been making irresponsible, insensitive and even provocative statements – all to save UMNO and Barisan Nasional from being defeated in the next general election.

Who believes that Najib could caution or check Mahathir?

Only on Thursday, Mahathir made the highly mischievous statement that the Chinese voters are the kingmakers for the 13th general election as the Malays are divided among three "small" parties and that the Chinese voters will decide who forms the government after the general election.

I had rebutted this statement, stating that the Malaysian Chinese are not and do not want to be the "kingmakers" in the 13 general election.

I also pointed out that "the harsh reality is that the electoral arithmetic does not allow the Chinese voters to be the 'kingmakers'".

Let us look at the "electoral arithmetic" in Malaysia to understand why the Chinese voters cannot be the "kingmakers" in the 13th general election.

There are only 34 parliamentary seats out of 222 where the Chinese comprise a majority of voters. Even if Pakatan Rakyat (PR) wins all of the Chinese votes in these seats, it will only yield

15% of total parliamentary seats.

There are another 55 parliamentary seats where Chinese voters constitute between 30% to 50% of the voters. Even if PR is able to win 80% of Chinese votes in these seats, it would still need between 35% to 40% of support from the other communities in order to win these seats.

In total, this means that there are only 89 parliamentary seats where the Chinese comprise more than 30% of total voters. Even if PR is to win all these seats, this would only constitute 40% of total parliamentary seats, which is not enough for a majority of parliamentary seats.

Instead, what we are increasingly seeing is the rejection of the Barisan Nasional (BN) by voters of all races, including in many Malay majority as well as ethnically 'mixed' seats which were previously 'impregnable' BN strongholds.

For example, in the 2008 general election, a majority of Malay and non-Malay voters voted against the BN in Malay majority seats such as Pokok Sena and Kuala Kedah in Kedah, Parit Buntar and Bagan Serai in Perak, Shah Alam and Kota Raja in Selangor and Titiwangsa in Kuala Lumpur.

A majority of Malay and non-Malay voters also voted against the BN in ethnically mixed seats such as Padang Serai in Kedah, Bayan Baru and Nibong Tebal in Penang and Bandar Tun Razak in Wilayah Persekutuan.

More recently, in the 2011 Sarawak state elections, a majority of both Chinese and non-Chinese voters in the state seat of Kidurong voted against the BN leading to a historic 7,000-vote majority for the DAP's incumbent candidate Chew Chin Sing.

By playing up racial fears, Mahathir is resorting to an old and outdated form of fear-mongering and politicking which is becoming irrelevant for Malaysians all over the country who are sick and tired of the corruption, cronyism and abuses of power of the Barisan Nasional government.

The next general election is a historic opportunity for all Malaysians to unite to send a clear message that they want to end the 54 years of misrule by the BN and put in place a new Pakatan Rakyat government which will protect the rights, freedom and welfare of all Malaysians, regardless of whether they are Malays, Chinese, Indians, Ibans or Kadazans.

The real kingmakers in the 13th general election, therefore, are not the Chinese voters but all Malaysian voters, whether Malays, Chinese, Indians, Kadazans or Ibans to unite and bring about a peaceful transition of federal power for the first time in the 54-year history of the nation to end corruption, cronyism and abuses of power.

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