

Day Of Infamy For Malaysian Journalism
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Today is a day of infamy for Malaysian journalism – with the UMNO publication Utusan Malaysia defending the indefensible instead of apologizing for being the foremost "Lies-paper" in Malaysia in the past three years under the premiership of Najib Razak.

At a forum on social media organized by Biro Tata Negara (BTN) of the Prime Minister's Department and the 1Malaysia Social Media Convention secretariat, Utusan Malaysia's deputy chief editor Mohd Zaini Hassan claimed that media practitioners are allowed to spin the facts to paint a "desired picture" to the reader and to launch a "gentlemanly attack" against the Opposition.

Claiming that there are three categories of "fact, spin and blatant lies", Zaini purports to distance himself from "lies" but gives his approval to "spin", saying: "Spin we can; no matter how we spin a certain fact to be biased in our favour, that's okay."

Zaini is insulting the intelligence of Malaysians in trying a "spin of all spins" attempting to pass off lies and blatant lies as mere "spin"!

Spin must clearly be delineated from lies and blatant lies. Spin occurs when facts are linked in a deceptive way that attempts to portray an individual or organization in the best or worst possible light.

But what Utusan had been most guilty off in the past three years is not just deception through "spinning" certain facts while omitting other facts, but the retailing of downright lies and falsehoods.

A good case in point are the "blatant lies" in the Utusan Malaysia front-page story on Monday, July 9, 2012 that the DAP would contest 90 of the 222 parliamentary seats to dominate Pakatan Rakyat and appoint the Prime Minister in the 13th general election.

This was part of an irresponsible, unprincipled, malicious and anti-national campaign by UMNO propagandists to stoke baseless racial suspicion, distrust and fear that the Malays will lose political power if UMNO is defeated and the Barisan Nasional replaced by Pakatan Rakyat in the 13th general election as there is simply no kernel of truth in such a claim.

What is even more disgusting and totally against all tenets of ethical and responsible journalism is that Utusan completely ignored the denials issued by DAP and Pakatan Rakyat leaders debunking the Utusan front-page lies the very same day of their publication, including my media statement that although final seat allocations between Pakatan Rakyat parties have still to be fully completed, "DAP is not contemplating contesting more than 60 parliamentary seats or less than 28 per cent of the total 222 parliamentary seats.

Utusan Malaysia completely ignored these denials and through planted reports and articles in the past four days tried to keep alive the lie that the DAP would contest 90 seats – including a report on Wednesday, 11th July 2012 quoting the Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein attacking the DAP for wanting to contest 90 seats in the 13GE (as if Hishammuddin does not know nor care that the DAP had pronounced the Utusan report a lie!)

Utusan resort to such blatant lies is not to launch a "gentlemanly attack" on the Opposition, but a most irresponsible, mischievous and diabolical attack, as when Utusan on another occasion front-paged another lie that the DAP wanted to establish a Christian Malaysia and appoint a Christian Prime Minister.

Malaysian taxpayers are entitled to know why is UMNO/Barisan Nasional government giving its blessing to such unethical and dishonest journalism by being involved in the social media convention through the Biro Tata Negara of the Prime Minister's Department, not only to disseminate unethical and dishonest principles of journalism and its application in the social media, but to carry out what is clearly divisive and destructive social activities which could only undermine inter-racial harmony, national unity and 1Malaysia nation-building.

Most importantly, is this confirmation that Biro Tata Negara (BTN) of the Prime Minister's Department is back in business as the most divisive and destructive brain-washing centre in the country, dividing instead of uniting Malaysians regardless of race, religion, region, class, age or gender despite earlier assurances that BTN is being reformed into a truly Malaysian rather than racist institution?

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