

Umno traits are common Malay traits

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The subject of who is the real Malay has always been of interest in Umno gatherings

Being Malay and being Umno in character ...may this twain forever meet.

With due apology to the late Rudyard Kipling for a little twist to that phrase he wrote about east and west, Datuk Seri Najib Razak expressed it even clearer when putting two and two together in his speech yesterday.

The subject of who is the real Malay has always been of interest in Umno gatherings, largely to bring everyone on the right historical track as Umno was founded on the wave of noble Malay nationalism.

Past party presidents and other speakers had dealt with it in past assemblies before -- the common Malay disposition being soft-spoken, shy, polite and loyal. Some went so far as quoting the orang putih version of the orang Melayu.

It was told that former British High Commissioner Frank Swettenham for instance once wrote at length about his impressions of the "Real Malay", saying the Real Malay was "lazy to a degree, is without method or order of any kind, knows no regularity even in the hours of his meals and considers time as of no importance".

Other British administrators also formed the same opinion about Malays. Francis Light, William Maxwell, R.J. Wilkinson, R.O. Winstedt and others had remarked that the Malays were "resigned to their lot, not making an effort, not wanting to make a fortune, and contented with the way of life they were accustomed to".

The same went for several other Western writers, such as Godinho de Eredia, a Portuguese, who described the Malays as "arrogant, amorous, untrustworthy, fun-loving, thieving, improper, devious, capable but careless in work, spend time on festivities and love singing".

Yesterday, this was what Najib said about being Malay: "We have heard that those in the category includes the Bugis, Minang, Arabs, Muallaf (the new converts), and dozens of tribes in Sabah and Sarawak.

"In the midst of it, we have our three vice-presidents from the various origins -- Javanese, Turkish and Bajau. That's okay, because the most important thing is, they are all Malays."

And then, the party president struck the relevant chord about the Malay-Umno connection and provided an analysis of what being an Umno character was all about as opposed to being merely an Umno member.

"Firstly, an Umno character is one who is loyal to the party. He would not betray the party,"

Najib began, elaborating that even in the most difficult of times, it was crucial to abide by decisions reached in a consensus without resorting to dirty tricks or back-stabbing.

And among the other traits:

LOVE for the party, which includes the courage to voice own opinion as well as to listen to the opinions of others;

HAVING adequate religious knowledge to guide through life;

HAVING intimate knowledge about Umno, its principles, history and struggles;

DUTIFULLY serving the party and willing to make sacrifices;

SINCERITY in serving the people;

"In short," Najib said, "the ultimate sacrifice is one done in the interests and image, not of oneself, but of the party."

Umno character? These are common Malay traits.

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