

**Unity govt – the way forward**  
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**By R. Nadeswaran**

FOR most part of the period after the last general election, our members of parliament were pre-occupied with power politics. Both sides of the divide are guilty of being mesmerised with power.

If politicians had only kept time sheets of the time they, party members, their cronies and associates spent on scheming and planning strategies, it could run into a few million man-hours. Imagine the amount of money spent?

Our policemen are spending more time at public gatherings than arresting criminals. The prosecutors are engaged in party disputes instead of bringing the crooked to book. Everyone seems to have their priorities wrong.

If only the police, the Attorney-General's Chambers and the judiciary kept a record of expenses that trials cost, the people will simply be aghast. Yet, when requests are made for money to upgrade roads or build a classroom, the response is "budgetary constraints" and "we will include it in the next Malaysia Plan".

We had enough of name-calling, play acting, subversion, accusations and taunts with racial and religious undertones. Where has all these got us to? Are we No 1 in Asean or Asia? Are we a must see destination? Have we set the benchmark for good governance? Despite all the natural resources and the oil money, we still lag behind some of our neighbours because we are expanding our time, effort, and money on power than on moving forward.

All this has to end. It has cost this glorious nation plenty. In the desire for power, the ordinary people have been caught in between and made to pay, although it is no fault of theirs. For the future of our nation, the people and their children, it is time to say enough is enough and sit down and talk about putting the country on track.

Yes, the time has come for all parties to put their ideological and political differences and draw up acceptable policies to take the country forward.

Technically, elections need not be called until March next year. Miracles can't happen overnight but another year will give parties enough time to reconcile differences, iron out policies and implement initiatives to help the country achieve its goals. Here's what I propose:

» Set up a unity government comprising the best brains with untainted hands from all political parties. There should be no place for sentiments or party hierarchy as this set of people will drive the country forward;

» This is easier said than done. The leaders of all parties should sit down to draw up the framework of this government and by consensus, agree on each member's portfolio, based on ability, knowledge and experience;

» All issues including tenders and contracts (except those which affect security) be available for public scrutiny and comment;

» Make all law enforcement agencies independent by making them report to a parliamentary committee;

» Set up a reconciliation commission on the same lines as the South African one which will identify weaknesses in the system by speaking to those affected and finding solutions to outstanding problems. It should not be a witch-hunt and should be aimed at identifying weaknesses in the system and those responsible for taking away money, property and other valuables of the state. Of course, if there is evidence of malfeasance, they should be referred to the relevant authorities.

The unity government should frame the terms and references for the commission which can look at the entire government machinery and having identified weaknesses, provide suggestions and solutions. Let them suggest which old policies should make way for new ones which will benefit all, not a few.

But the composition of the commission is vital and any effort to deck them in party colours is a recipe for disaster. Let us have independent-minded people with the same thoughts and objectives for the nation as a whole – not any sector or group. Do not appoint the "one statement a day keeps me in the news for a day" type of people or those whose track records (both professional and personal) cannot stand public scrutiny.

As one of the millions of citizens who are aghast that this great country is being divided by selfish individuals and groups, this is my humble suggestion. We had enough of the fighting. It has taken its toll both physically and monetarily on the people and the nation. The time has come for all good men and women to come to the aid of the country to work out schemes which create a better quality of life for all citizens irrespective of their race, creed, colour or religion.

*R. Nadeswaran sees a unity government as the only way to get the country out of the impasse it is facing. He is theSun's UK correspondent based in London and can be reached at: [citizen-nades@thesundaily.com](mailto:citizen-nades@thesundaily.com)*

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