

'Red Bean Army' a figment of Utusan's imagination: Kit Siang
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BY CLARA CHOOI

KUALA LUMPUR, May 26 – Lim Kit Siang denied any knowledge today of the “Red Bean Army” (RBA), an online operation of cybertroopers allegedly funded by the DAP to incite hatred, particularly among the Chinese, against Barisan Nasional (BN).

The 72-year-old DAP veteran (picture) said in a statement here that he had never heard before about the RBA until Umno-owned daily Utusan Malaysia reported about it, adding that it was merely a figment of the daily's imagination and that of its owners.

“Let me state clearly and categorically that until a few days ago when I came across the Utusan Malaysia series of write-ups on the so-called 'Red Bean Army', I have not heard of the term before,” he said.

Utusan Malaysia front-paged a report on the RBA yesterday, alleging that some 200 RBA members are on the DAP's payroll earning up to RM3,000 monthly and that the party has been spending some RM1.5 million over the past six years to fund the operation.

The report also claimed that the duty of the RBA is to attack any politician, businessman or entertainer who are seen as pro-BN via social media sites.

The army allegedly functions in two areas – one from a hotel in Kuala Lumpur and another based in Komtar, Penang, where the DAP helms the state government.

In the New Straits Times today, ex-PKR Youth information bureau secretary Nordin Ahmad said opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim too was fully aware of the RBA and has been utilising them to spread falsehoods about the BN government.

“Among others, this group is responsible for the vicious rumour circulating online that several polling centres had suffered blackouts during the vote-counting process on May 5, sparking claims of election irregularities,” he was quoted as saying.

Nordin also alleged that Anwar had employed the RBA's services the moment Pakatan Rakyat (PR) was formed after the March 2008 polls.

“All these are modern-day fairy tales completely without one iota of truth in them,” Lim said.

“DAP does not pay a single sen to any cybertroopers, unlike Umno/BN, which used hundreds of millions of ringgit of public funds to organise Social Media Conventions all over the country to raise an army of 10,000 Umno/BN cybertroopers in the run-up to the 13th general elections,” he alleged.

Furthermore, Lim said his party would not have the financial muscle to pull off such an expensive operation, noting that if it had spent RM1.5 million monthly over the past six years to run the RBA, it would have spent an overall sum of RM108 million.

“DAP just does not have this type of money although to Umno/BN, this is just a drop in the ocean of their funds,” he said.

Responding to reports on the RBA yesterday, Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi reportedly said that his ministry, through the police, would work together with the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) as well as the Malaysian CyberSecurity to check on the contents channelled on the web by cybertrooper groups and determine if they had violated social media laws.

Noting this, Lim reminded the authorities of reports flooding the Internet before and during the just-concluded polls, which he said had wrongfully targeted him and his party as either having instigated the 1969 racial riots or painted them as racists.

"How much I had wished that the police, the MCMC and Malaysian CyberSecurity had identified the culprits and cleaned up the racism and poison spewed by Umno/BN cybertroopers on the Internet during the 13th general elections.

"But absolutely nothing had been done," he said.

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