

Najib's think-tank of 'kangkung' professors
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YOURSAY 'If you want to control minds, you first subvert the intelligentsia.'

Council of Professors comes under PM's Dept

LifeFlier: These 2,000-over professors have now become part of the prime minister's think-tank team. Apparently Najib Razak urgently needs to harness these brains for his political significance.

And I doubt if it will make any positive differences to the country because the core of the issue is both leadership and morality, and definitely not intellectual deficiency.

Tkite: This is a step backwards. I hope the genuine professors have distinguished themselves from the 'kangkung' professors by opting out of this so-called Council of Professors (MPN). Many of them are known to be rent-seeker sycophants who do nothing but parrot Umno politicians.

This is a sad day for Malaysian intellectual independence. I can't comprehend what good it can make. Professors can always render their advice without fear or favour. Why subject yourselves to the whims and fancies of the PM's Department?

As professors you just profess. Your authority is in your knowledge and wisdom, not an organisation or government department.

SpongeBob: "Great research universities must insist on independence from government and on the exercise of academic freedom," said American lawyer Alan Dershowitz.

Now under the Prime Minister's Department, MPN has lost its academic freedom and independence. It will be under the control and influence of Umno propagandists.

Ipohcrite: If I were a professor, I wouldn't want to be in the council, for sure. With the council under PM's Department, it would compromise my academic integrity and personal freedom of intellectual thought.

But that's just me, the rest can go suck up to the government and pretend they have the ear of Putrajaya when, in fact, they will just parrot the very views the government wants them to. Thanks, but no thanks.

Abasir: Those directly responsible for the plummeting educational standards and rankings are now duly recognised for their contribution to "nusa dan agama". Perchance these "intellectuals" will replace the likes of McKinsey? No?

Chris Wong: If you want to control minds, you first subvert the intelligentsia of the country by putting it under political patronage. Standard tactic of authoritarian governments which don't believe in democracy, and use it as a means of holding on to power.

ZhangFei: Oh come on, Najib, why you need the MPN? Where's your existing so-called group of

advisers? How sure are you that the MPN will be doing better than your existing advisers or experts?

Perhaps you want to groom another bunch of half-past-six advisers. But looking at your previous record, no matter how many advisers or consultant you absorb into your department, you still suck in doing your job.

Pputeh: It is sad that this country has dropped to this level. Even so-called professors are not allowed to think and are going to be led by their noses.

Good luck, Malaysia. As a *Malaysiakini* reader said, thank God I am retired but I'm sad for my grandchildren.

Odysseus: Academics should strive to be independent. They can always provide advice to the government at any time and make themselves accessible to anyone at all times.

Putting themselves under a ministry in the government does not enhance their credibility nor make them any better.

Swipenter: Even the 'kangkung' professors are now under the thumb of the 'kangkung' prime minister.

Throughout history, all despotic and dictatorial regimes have invariably tried to control or kill off the independent scholars and intellectuals. They only give patronage to those scholars and intellectuals submissive to them. The Khmer Rouge regime is one of the best examples in modern history.

How can low-standard tertiary institutions produce and then retain good professors in the first place, not that there aren't any left here.

MinahBulat: I bet you the best chairperson they can have leading these professors is none other than 'clarion blaring' Dr Ridhuan Tee Abdullah from the Defence University of Malaysia.

Headhunter: Another stupid and sinister move. I hope the professors realise that the government now wants to control their mind, too, as if they are not controlled already. Unfortunately there are some who will suck it up like fools.

Louis: This is another means of keeping the professors in check. Our education is really in reverse gear.

Vietnam, a country which definitely is behind us after years of war, is picking up and now already better than us in Programme for International Student Assessment (Pisa) ranking.

And we are not ashamed, which is the best part.

P Dev Anand Pillai: This is the dumbest move that the educated lot have done to themselves. Professors will only be respected if they hold impartial views on their field of expertise.

Fourtan: I think one of me can put the entire council to shame (as I love to eat kangkung belacan).

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