

GE14: Even PAS can't save Umno this time
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COMMENT | MCA president Liow Tiong Lai and his deputy president Wee Ka Siong have gone on a media campaign claiming that DAP is out to “eliminate” MCA and therefore Chinese voters should “save” MCA in order to have “checks and balances”.

To “save” MCA? What about saving Malaysia? Why didn't they talk about “checks and balances” regarding the extensive power of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak which he clearly abused, especially in the case of the handling of the 1MDB scandals, thereby making Malaysians suffer?

Wee went even further to argue that DAP is seeking to replace MCA as a partner to Umno in government. This is ridiculous. MCA's argument is premised upon the idea that the Umno ship would never sink.

Perhaps they don't realise that Umno is struggling and that no one has ruled out the possibility of Umno's defeat in the coming 14th general election.

Umno won 88 seats in the 2013 general election, of which 14 are in Sabah and one in Labuan. The remaining 73 parliamentary seats are in the peninsula.

Najib and Umno's popularity have plummeted since 2015. Most serious pollsters and commentators put Umno's support among the Malay voters now at around 40 percent, a 20 percent drop from where it was in the 2013 general election.

Umno's only saviour is PAS. Some pollsters opine that in a three-cornered fight scenario, if the PAS support base doesn't shrink or if voters who hate Najib shift their votes to PAS, Umno may prevail as the victor. But both are very big “ifs”.

PAS' base has clearly shrunk, or otherwise PAS would not have to worry about a possible defeat in Kelantan. Voters who hate Najib are likely also aware that PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang is doing Najib's bidding.

No one should take voters for granted. Never assume that voters can be fooled by three-cornered fight strategies that would keep both Umno and Najib in power.

Even if PAS is still a factor, PAS still can't save Umno in Kedah, Johor and Sabah.

In Kedah, Pakatan Rakyat lost six seats nett in 2013 compared, with 2008 and BN's Malay support increased by six percent due to the factor of Mukhriz Mahathir and Dr Mahathir Mohamad (plus the anti-Azizan Razak sentiment – Azizan was the PAS menteri besar at the time).

However, this time the Mukhriz-Mahathir factor is on the side of Pakatan Harapan.

Apart from the seats that Mukhriz swung to BN in 2013, which are now available to Pakatan Harapan, Mahathir's bases of Langkawi and Kubang Pasu, as well as Mukhriz's base of Jerlun, are now competitive for the first time in history.

There is a realistic possibility that BN may lose between seven and 10 parliamentary seats in Kedah. The PAS factor doesn't really matter.

A people's election

Of Johor's 26 parliamentary seats, Pakatan Harapan has six seats now, i.e. Bersatu, one, PKR, one and DAP four. Of the remaining 20 seats, 10 of them were marginal in 2013. Ayer Hitam was not on that list but now is competitive, though difficult.

Again, the PAS factor doesn't matter in Johor.

The opposition won three seats in Sabah in 2013 but BN won another four seats with less than 50 percent of the votes cast, thanks to multi-cornered fights in the Kadazan areas.

There is an interesting piece of news recently, which says the Sabah BN government is now intending to withdraw the gazetting of 13 new seats created in 2016, ostensibly because they led to BN's internal bickering.

The real story is that half of those new seats are in Bajau areas, which are former Umno leader Shafie Apdal's turf. When these seats were created, it was assumed that they were solidly behind BN, which is clearly not the case now.

If Harapan Sabah and Parti Warisan can collaborate in a grand coalition for Sabah, BN may lose up to 10 more parliamentary seats in Sabah.

Therefore, Sabah, Johor and Kedah may contribute up to 30 seats for the new Harapan federal government.

Apart from that, if there is an across-the-board 15 percent swing of Malay voters who voted for BN in 2013 to Harapan in 2018, Harapan may win five more seats each in Perak, Selangor and Pahang and at least two each in Negeri Sembilan and Malacca.

Of Umno's 73 seats in the peninsula, only 30 are safe for BN. The rest are all competitive and even PAS can't save Umno, not to mention MCA.

MCA is only Umno's "also-ran", which depends on Umno for Malay support and it will not be of much use for Umno's sinking ship.

MCA's top brass are just fishing for sympathy. But the next election is not about their survival.

The GE14 is about Malaysians deciding their own future, about the people voting for a new government, and about Umno becoming the new opposition.

Liow and Wee should accept the fact that this coming general election has nothing to do with MCA. It's the people's election.

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