

**“What is the New Normal in Malaysian Politics:
Changing Political Scenarios”**

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Miss Ng Yeen Seen,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It’s good to be back again. As you would have noticed Prime Minister Najib’s programme is crammed full. The full political wattage is on display in what seems a disguise of the delicately balanced state of Malaysian politics. We continue to suffer from what seems could be a fatal illusion.

2. Please don't be ^{surprised}. It's not so difficult to divine that Islam is on the rise. As is PAS. The party may lose in Tenang but Cikgu Mala, its candidate in the by-election, is paving the way for a resurrection of ^{an ancient Islamic practice.} Her decision not to shake hands with men is, just like the wearing of tudung or scarf, a personal choice. Lee Kuan Yew has urged his Malay and Muslim rakyat to be 'less strict' on their religious observances to aid racial integration and Singapore's nation building process. In Malaysia, the opposite is happening. Strict observance of Islam is percolating, in preparation for an eventual Islamic (theocratic) state.

3. UMNO nor any other Malay-led party can ever hope to outflank PAS on Islam. Grow up! Demographic changes benefit PAS, not UMNO in the long-term. As is pan-Islamism.

The much sought Malaysian nationhood will not occur for a long time. The notion is good. Malayan Union ~~failed~~ failed in 1946 and ^{so did Onn Jaafar} 1951, _{was}. His successors, including his son, talked vaguely about it. None dared go further than merely talking.

4. Even if Pakatan Rakyat wins in 2012 or 2013, not unlikely, though it looks less optimistic for now, Pakatan will not be able to push for a *satu rupa* ^{Malaysia} *bangsa* unless, their leaders brutally push to achieve it. Perhaps Pakatan will be a more serious player to force the issue and that could only happen if it does exceedingly well in PRU 13 (the next general election). The Pribumi's attitude, with or without Perkasa, is hardening, in a gentle Malay way!

5. I have said before, and I repeat, Najib is a hard nut to crack. Badawi was a bad joke, Dr Mahathir played on us. Galas, Batu Sapi and Tenang notwithstanding, BN has a long way to go before it regains the confidence of many Malaysians who deserted it on 8 March 2008. The Pribumi heartland hasn't changed much. UMNO or BN remains strong. The political fervour in the heartland is hardly diminished. A strong performing economy will entrench UMNO further.

6. What I fear most is racial unity, which once was strong, is now souring. The polemic on 'Interlok' is not helping. Literature should not and mustn't be politicised otherwise it opens the Pandora's box! The level of racial relationship is acceptable but it has to be nurtured and strengthened, not distracted by non-principal issues.

7. It is agonising. I am appalled, more than ever, whenever I hear lamentation, and demands by both sides of the divide even amongst and within the Pribumi. All will be well if we all stop ^{the} 'fighting' and the 'infighting'. Whichever alliance wins there should be stability unless it's a hung parliament, which is unlikely to occur. Business shall dwell and prosper whether under BN or a PAS-led or PKR-led Pakatan government.

