The Barisan Nasional will be using the Chinese Communist Party return visit to Malaysia next month to win Chinese voters in the same way it used the meeting of Razak with Mao Tse Tung for the same purpose in the 1974 general elections

Speech by Parliamentary Opposition Leader, DAP Secretary-General and MP for Tanjong, Lim Kit Siang, at the DAP Bukit Bendera Chinese New Year Gathering at Aston Bungalow, Tanjong Bungah on Friday, February 12, 1995 at 8 pm

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The Barisan Nasional has invited the Chinese Communist Party to send a delegation for a return visit to Malaysia next month.

The Barisan Nasional will be using the Chinese Communist Party return visit to Malaysia next month to win Chinese voters in the same way it used the meeting of Tun Razak with Mao Tse Tung in Peking for the same purpose in the 1974 general elections

This will be one of the items of the China card which the Barisan Nasional will be playing in the next general elections.

Mao Tse Tung was a great vote-puller and the Barisan Nasional was very successful with its China card in the 1974 general elections, where it secured 60.7 per cent of the popular vote - the highest popular vote ever secured by the Barisan Nasional or Alliance since Mercleka.

However, Malaysian voters who were influenced by the Barisan Nasional China card to vote for the Barisan Nasional in the 1974 general elections later found that the Barisan Nasional's China card in the general elections and its nation-building policies are two completely different things.

The Barisan Nasional's successful playing of the China card in the 1974 general elections did not prevent the Barisan Nasional from proclaiming a ‘One -Language, One Culture' Policy which had to be opposed and resisted by the DAP -and not by the Gerakan or MCA.

Similarly, the Barisan Nasional's successful playing of the China card in the 1974 general elections did not make the Barisan Government more open, democratic, transparent, or accountable.

Abuses of power, financial scandals and corruption reared their ugly heads without check or restraint and have today become one of the most serious problems in the nation.

In 1977 there was major arrests of Opposition leaders under the Internal Security Act, which was followed by an even bigger swoop of ISA arrests, under the Operation La Ian g in 1987. Will the use of the China card in the next general elections similarly be followed by massive ISA arrests, may be in 1997?

This is a pertinent question, for the 1974 general elections is the best example that the playing of the China card by the Barisan Nasional in a general elections has nothing to do with its nation-building policies, whether on Internal Security Act, Official Secrets Act, Police Act, Printing Presses and

Publications Act, the independence of the judiciary, the division of Malaysians into bumiputeras and non-bumiputeras, the national education policy, the abolition of quotas, the restoration of local government elections etc.

Unlike the 1974 general elections, the Barisan Nasional will playing an additional card in the next general elections to win Chinese voters - the Chinese card. This is the reason for the spectacle of UMNO leaders everywhere taking up Chinese calligraphy and the profusion of Chinese programmes over the television channels during this Chinese New Year.

This Chinese New Year is undoubtedly special over the television networks - but why only when general elections is around the corner?

The Gerakan and the MCA would have undergone a radical transformation by the next general elections - for until the 1990 general elections, they depended on UMNO's votes for election but in the next general elections, they will be depending on the UMNO leaders to win Chinese support!

However, both the China and the Chinese cards that the Barisan Nasional is playing for the coming general elections has nothing to do with the biggest question in the next general elections:

Whether the minor liberalisation of the Barisan Nasional in the past four year's would be extended to become Full Liberalisation to give every Malaysian an equal place under the Malaysian sun, whether political, economic, educational, social, cultural, religious or any other nation-building aspect.

Malaysians must see beyond the China and Chinese cards of the Barisan Nasional leaders, and demand the realisation of their long-standing aspirations for a Malaysian Malaysia, where all Malaysians are equal citizens and who are no longer divided into bumiputeras and non-bumiputeras.

Because the China card, the Chinese cards and other cards up the sleeve of the Barisan Nasional, the DAP will be fighting an even more difficult political terrain in the next general elections as compared to the 1950 general elections.

This does not mean that the Barisan Nasional leaders do not have worries about the next general elections.

Their greatest worry, particularly that of Gerakan leaders, is undoubtedly DAP's Battle of Tanjong 3, which will challenge its control of the Penang State Government.

The Barisan Nasional also has other national worries, in particular on public revulsion at the rampant corruption and abuses of power, as in the blatant and unethical manner in which millions of shares are allocated to favoured bumiputera individuals and the arbitrary, inequitable and unfair land acquisitions not for public purpose but for the profits of a few individuals and private companies.