

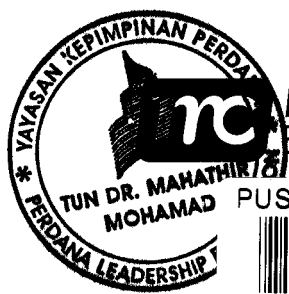
ON THE RECORD

A B D U L L A H A H M A D

625
D

ON THE RECORD

A B D U L L A H A H M A D



TUN DR. MAHATHIR
MOHAMAD

Marshall Cavendish
Editions

PUSTAKA PERDANA



1006006

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	10
THE GLOBAL FEAR	
Danger of Mixing Religion with Politics	14
Menace of Terrorism Affects All	17
On Understanding Islam	22
Radical Islam is Not a Fad	28
NAM Rises to Changing Role	33
NAM Must Stand by Ideals	38
Understand the Terror First	43
The Problem is of Extremes	47
FACING TERRORISM IN MALAYSIA	
Facing Militant Islamic Orthodoxy in Malaysia	52
Act Now or it Will Be Too Late	58
Strong Stand on Subversives a Must	64
War on Militancy Will Be Long	69
Foiling the Malay Taliban	74
Keep Local Falwells in Check	79
A Moderate in UMNO's Mould	84
The Theocracy Conspiracy	88
A Bizarre Brew of Ideas	92
TERROR IN THE MIDDLE EAST	
A War That's Bound to Fail	97
Iraq Must Comply or Face US Aggression	101
Road Map Going Nowhere	106
Freeing the Prophet's Land	110

THE UNITED STATES IMPERIUM	
George W. Bush for US President	115
US Must Learn from Others	121
In Washington, Dogs are Better Friends	125
US Must Accept Reality on Anwar	131
Relationship on the Mend	136
Reviving US-Malaysia Ties	140
Winning Friends and Influence	145
What Did Bush Really Know?	148
Bush and the US Imperium	152
RESOLVING CONFLICT	
Partnership, Not Dominion	159
Building a Bridge to Rome	164
How Terror War Can Be Won	168
Evian Conclave Tests Frayed Alliance	173
Answer Terror with Courage	177
Syria is Integral to Peace in Middle East	182
Healing the Wounds of Islam	186
ASIAN CONCERNS	
Myanmar Problem, Myanmar Solution	191
After Vajpayee, Who for PM?	195
Gus Dur is the Science of Survival	200
Preparing for the Aussies	204
THE MEDIA IN WORLD AFFAIRS	
Western Media Freedom is a Farce	209
Commitment to Fairness, Freedom	215
Message Makes the Medium	220
Crafting a Third World Voice	225
Abbreviations	233

Preface

The benefits of being editor-in-chief of the *New Straits Times* group of newspapers arise not simply from the numerous publications themselves. They arise also from the opportunity to be stimulated and educated by working with several of Malaysia's best journalists; from the chance to travel all over the world; from the support I get from the owners, directors, readers, advertisers; and from the work of my predecessors as editor-in-chief especially Tan Sri Leslie Hoffman and Tan Sri Lee Siew Yee. I am grateful to Tan Sri Samad Ismail, Tan Sri Noordin Sopiee, Dato' Dr Munir Majid, Tan Sri Mazlan Nordin and Dato' Kadir Jasin and many others for their inspiration and fellowship.

Journalism is a self-indulgent profession, on the margin (some claim it has a ringside seat) of great affairs. Whatever you think, editors like me have more fun and are better paid than ministers. However, ministers are on the field while editors are on the touchline. There are editors and writers who wish to perceive themselves as players, rather than as recorders and critics, or toadies as the case may be. If an editor decides to be proactive, he runs the risk of colliding with the powerful person who controls or influences the government, people and events. Many people believe I was perhaps more than a privileged spectator of the Malaysian political comedy. As a result I suffered. Gladly.

Back in 1960, Tan Sri Leslie Hoffman had predicted I might be the first Malay editor-in-chief of *The Straits Times*. When he said that to me it all seemed not an implausible thing. In any event, forty years later I did become editor-in-chief of the newspaper though not the first Malay (I was second and Kadir Jasin was first). Hoffman's prediction might have happened if I had not succumbed to Tun Razak's persuasion to be a politician. I do not regret the decision.

One of the perils for a prime minister, minister, company chairman or an editor is that it becomes easy to forget that privileged access is granted to the holder of an office, rather than the individual. When I was summarily fired, the wonderful window on power closed instantly. Only very foolish former prime ministers, ministers, secretaries-general, generals, chairmen or editors expect matters to be otherwise. However, I am shocked to see the level of political and social exploitation of the people and events: the terrifying thing is not what they do; rather, what it reveals.

I would like to record here the names of three colleagues with whom I shared a wonderful working relationship, on my side anyway. They are Kamalul Idris whom I have re-recruited as the associate editor (against strong protests); Gopal Krishna Rao (sub-editor) and Lim Thow Boon (editorial consultant) whose contracts I was always pleased to renew. And thanks to Marshall Cavendish (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd (General & Reference Publishing), particularly Christine Chong and Paige Chia, without whom this book could never have been published.

My principal thanks go to my wife, Fauzah who has always tolerated the discipline I imposed on my work when such discipline was needed, to my children and grandchildren who provided (and provide) the love and laughter that kept me cheerful despite tensions and traumas that accompanied the editorship.

Make no mistake, I loved what I did. Somebody ought to do the job, tell the story. The support and friendship of many persons at the *New Straits Times* and its sister papers, not least the board of directors, contributed much to the joy of being editor-in-chief of the *New Straits Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *Malay Mail*, *Sunday Mail*, *Berita Harian*, *Berita Minggu*, *Harian Metro* and *Metro Ahad*.

This book is designed for browsing. The reader will get an idea of the types of messages I was imparting in my own words. Hopefully,

some of the twenty-five million Malaysians will eventually be capable of thinking for themselves. If this happens I will be the happiest man. Money was the last thing I was thinking about when the publisher asked for my permission to reprint her selection of my weekly columns (out of about 148 articles altogether) into this book.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anwar Ibrahim', written in a cursive style.

Kuala Lumpur, 4 July 2005