

**Openness**  
**Chedet.co.cc**  
**June 16, 2008**  
**By Dr. Mahathir Mohamad**

After I stepped down there was a lot of talk about the Malaysian Government being more open. The foreign press gleefully reported that after I left UMNO, there would be even greater freedom in everything.

I would not be able to make a comparison between my “dictatorial regime” which a certain former judge described in his book as comparable to that of Idi Amin of Uganda with the present freely elected Government. But I would like to point out certain things that people and journalists seem to ignore, which seems to belie the impression of “openness”.

If people care to study the mainstream papers and all the Malaysian television stations, they may notice that until lately the reports were exclusively about the Government’s achievements in managing the economy, the stability of the country and the well-being of the people. The Gross Domestic Product Growth is high and all the different communities seem very happy with the Government.

At least four pages in the mainstream newspapers are devoted to the activities of the Prime Minister and his advice to the people on what they should do and how they should live. It is the same with the television stations.

Random interviews with members of the public show unfailing support and appreciation of all the policies of the Government and of the Prime Minister.

There are no reports of dissent or criticisms of the Government or the Prime Minister in particular. The spontaneous welcome of the people to his visits clearly showed the general love for the leader and support for him. The eagerness to shake his hand was touching.

Criticism if any came only from the alternative media, the Internet websites and the bloggers. This is only to be expected in an open society.

Then came a bombshell in the form of the disastrous General Election. The “popular” Government parties fared very badly indeed, losing five states, one federal territory and failing to get the usual two-thirds majority in the Federal Parliament.

How could a Government with such openness and popularity do so badly, be so obviously rejected by the people?

The answer is very strange. It is because there is really no openness. The policy of the Government was and is to shut things up very tightly, so tightly that people, especially the liberal western media failed to detect the lack of openness.

It began with the sacking of many of the editorial staff of the party-owned newspapers and their replacement with hand-picked journalists whose main qualification is their hatred of the previous Prime Minister.

Then there is the unofficial "supremo" who would phone editors, including those not owned by Government parties to tell them what to write and how to write.

The spin doctors would be busy spinning every report to make them look good for the Government.

It is the same with the electronic media. All the television stations are either owned by the Government or those close to the Government and understandably chose not to criticise the Government.

UMNO members at all levels were not allowed to be critical of the Government.

Mostly only those supportive of the Prime Minister would be allowed to attend the UMNO General Assembly. If they have to be bribed in order to extol the virtues of the leader then so be it.

A sense of fear has been instilled among UMNO supporters so that they would desist from voicing critical opinions of the Government even between themselves in case they would be reported and might lose something or might be deprived of some goodies.

Any forum that was not by the Government authorities or by the party where criticisms of the Government might be heard were out of bounds to party members. In particular if the speaker was the former Prime Minister UMNO members must stay away from them.

The Government was very successful in blacking out news or talks about its failures. So good was the spin that even the leaders of the Government believed in the doctored information that they had allowed to be circulated.

Everything seemed to go the Government way. Everything seemed under control. Such was the impression created by the censored news that Government leaders in particular the Prime Minister were convinced that in any election, at any time with any candidates the Government party would sweep clean and would romp to victory as in 2004.

But the results proved otherwise. Having muzzled the Press and the people, having doctored all information, the Government leaders fell into their own trap. They so believed in their doctored information that they failed completely to detect disaffection and the antagonism of the people including their traditional supporters over their lack of openness and the behaviour as well as the policies of the Government.

And so, unable to express their opposition openly, the traditional supporters of the Government parties voted for the opposition or deliberately spoilt their voting slips or simply refused to vote. The results of the March 2008 elections tell the whole story.

There is really no openness just as there is no transparency in this Government. You

can deceive all of the people some of the time, some of the people all the time but you cannot deceive all the people all the time.

## 8 Comments

1. *ahmads*

October 15, 2009 at 11:12 am | [Permalink](#)

Dear Tun,

i believe there is no 100% truth in whatever report made by mainstream newspaper...not only in malaysia but the rest of the world against any government that is in power.

But whatever is made by the government of malaysia today i hope they are not only the malay champion but also to the rest of the people of malaysia. i mention this because the malays in the other country i believe is being shortchanged. if you make any trip down south eg spore you can see that even popular places like geulang serai, their coffee shops' servers are chinese from china whom cant even speak local language. what is wrong with employers of today? i still cant figure what is happening in today society?

2. *ARbAK*

June 26, 2008 at 3:27 pm | [Permalink](#)

Assalamualaikum Tun,Tun Siti dan Saudara Seperjuangan,  
Kepimpinan yang diamalkan oleh Pak Lah dan "Kadam-Kadam" nya ialah kepimpinan ala FIRAUN dan NAMRUD.Amalannya ialah sifat-sifat MUNAFIK iaitu; berbohong, tidak amanah dan mungkir janji.Pakaiannya ialah sifat-sifat ujub, takabur dan riak.

Kita jangan gentar berhadapan dengan kumpulan ini. Percaya dan yakinlah kepada Allah swt maha mengetahui lagi maha berkuasa. Walaupun satu dunia ini hendak melakukan kebaikan, nercaya ia TIDAK AKAN BERLAKU selain daripada apa yang telah ditentukan oleh Allah swt. Begitu juga sebaliknya walaupun satu dunia ini hendak melakukan keburukan, nercaya ia TIDAK AKAN BERLAKU selain daripada apa yang telah ditentukan oleh Allah swt. Bagi menghadapi kumpulan ini hendaklah kita kembali kepada Allah swt dalam erti kata sebenar-benarnya. KATAKAN YANG BENAR DAN TEGAKKAN KEBENARAN. Inilah jihat yang dituntut oleh Allah.

Kepada yang dikasihi Tun Sekeluarga dan rakan-rakan seperjuangan marilah kita bersama sama berjihat dengan menegakkan kebenaran ini dengan spreading the words around. setiap orang diminta menjelaskan perkara sebenar apa yang berlaku pada masa ini kepada keluarga dan rakan-rakannya. Semoga kita diberi taufik dan hidayah. Amin

3. *Bourne Ultimatum*

June 26, 2008 at 12:15 pm | [Permalink](#)

Dear Dr. Mahathir,

- 1) What is your opinion on the political and economical situation in Malaysia at present and in the next ten years?
  - 2) How do you describe best the transparency of the Malaysian government then (under your administration) and the present?
  - 3) Is there any possibility of a coup de tat like what had happened in Thailand?
- Please comment. Thank you.

4. *Asif Baloch*

June 26, 2008 at 9:19 am | [Permalink](#)

Assalam O Alykum Sir Dr. TMM,

I am a foreigner and having made four trips to Malaysia for investments in field of IT and Emerging Sciences personally felt that the Openness with Department of Immigration does not exist at all. The so called rules does not apply and seems to me that everyone wants to make a profit out of a foreigner specially in my case. Is it because of biased behavior? Racism?

Expats are forced to leave the country even after establishment of their business "FOR" the betterment of Malaysia not to mention. Who can keep a track of that Openness in that specific department? My very best regards to you.

Regards.

5. *simon li*

June 25, 2008 at 11:55 am | [Permalink](#)

Dear Tun Dr M,

What is your view on Raja Petra's SD?

It appears that Raja Petra has many sources of information inside UMNO, from whom he gets a lot of 'secrets'. As former PM, you would also have reliable sources, solicited or not, of information on such matters of national importance.

Could you kindly shed some light on this matter in order to get to the truth and compel the PM to be really 'open' in the administration of justice. As it is, the Atantulya murder and trial is one of the many tricks that Abdullah Badawi is playing on the people and nation.

Thank you.

6. *fortress*

June 25, 2008 at 1:31 am | [Permalink](#)

Salam TDM. Kerajaan BN sekarang ibarat pokok yang akar2nya tidak segar lagi manakala sebahagiannya tiada berfungsi lagi. Lambat laun pokok seumpama ini akan mati. Inilah akan terjadi pada BN.

Berbalik kepada pokok. Pokok yang segar akar2nya aktif menyerap air dan mineral dari tanah manakala dedaunnya menyerap oksigen dari udara dan dengan kuasa cahaya matahari menghasilkan bahan makanan yang kemudiannya disalurkan ke semua sel2 dalam pokok tersebut.

Apabila UMNO yang menjadi tulang belakang tidak lagi menghiraukan kritikan ahli2nya, pemimpin2nya dan bekas ahli2 dan bekas pemimpinnya maka UMNO tidak segar lagi dan tak dapat menghasilkan 'makanan' untuk disalurkan kepada semua ahli dan pemimpin2nya. Bila ini berlaku lambat laun UMNO akan mati.

Untuk mengatasi keadaan ini semua orang Melayu mestilah mula memberi kritikan yang berfaedah untuk kebaikan dan kesejahteraan UMNO. Semua cawangan UMNO mesti mengadakan dialog untuk mendengar rintihan rakyat dan sampaikan maklumat ini melalui saluran parti kepada Presiden UMNO.

Mesejnya mudah sekali: PAKLAH LETAK JAWATAN. Itu sahaja.

Semuga Allah SWT akan memberi bimbingan dan kepimpinan kepada kita semua dalam melayarkan Bahtera Merdeka. MERDEKA! MERDEKA! MERDEKA! Merdeka dari Paklah! Ameen.

Fortress

7. *[Chuah Kee Man](#)*

June 24, 2008 at 1:21 am | [Permalink](#)

I guess the press and media in Malaysia are still trying to "protect" their "backside"...scared that they license are being withdrawn or terminated. Semua jadi kaki bodek.... 😊

8. *[Muhammad Azli Shukri](#)*


June 23, 2008 at 1:49 pm | [Permalink](#)

saya percaya keterbukaan ada batasannya..

## 2 Comments

By [Muhammad Azli Shukri](#)  on [June 23, 2008 1:49 PM](#)

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