



**Abdullah  
Badawi's  
DILEMMA**

**Yahaya Ismail**

**USAHA TEGUH SDN BHD**

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**USAHA TEGUH SENDIRIAN BERHAD**

Peti Surat 8759, Kelana Jaya  
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## ❧ INTRODUCTION ❧

Malaysian politics after Mahathir will be very interesting to watch since his successor, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, is Mahathir's choice that has yet to be endorsed and accepted by the UMNO delegates. Abdullah retains his deputy president's post without being challenged because UMNO Supreme Council passed a resolution that denied the two top posts to be contested. UMNO itself has postponed its meeting for the election of office bearers of Supreme Council after the general election, which many observers believed, would be held in April or May next year. Mahathir's departure from active politics beginning this October will push Abdullah Badawi to be the leader who will determine the success or failure of UMNO in particular and Barisan Nasional government in general.

This coming election will be the barometer to judge and evaluate the success or failure of his leadership. Having broken out from Mahathir's cocoon Abdullah will be at his own steam to guide his own political fate as well as the driving force of the government. However, if he fails in his mission to achieve better election results for UMNO in particular and Barisan Nasional in general, then, he would be under strong pressure to retain his premiership. Others may challenge his leadership of course. At present, too, there are leaders who are preparing for the showdown in the coming UMNO election in 2004.

Since he is the anointed successor as premier Abdullah has been the center of focus by all interested groups, inside and outside the country. Many groups in Malaysia are skeptical of his leadership quality when they compare the dynamism of Mahathir with him. Being a bureaucrat of over two decades he is considered a man who practices consensus, slow in decision making, too cautious, and at times, lacks depth and foresight. This is the first time in post independent Malaysia a former senior civil servant is given the privilege to lead UMNO as well as the government of the country. Whether he can achieve miracles for his success or succumb to failure will be clearly seen in the coming national election. Abdullah's fate is in the balance that can tilt either way if God disposes what he proposes, and if the rakyat decide to go against his leadership too.

Political instability and conflicts in UMNO can trigger instability in the government because UMNO is the dominating party that guides the destiny of the country and the multiracial society since independence. Therefore other component parties of Barisan Nasional and the private sector too are very concerned of the kind of leadership accepted and voted by UMNO. The fear of money politics and the corruption of leaders and delegates which incurred the wrath of Mahathir in his presidential speech in an UMNO annual general meeting a couple of years ago, would rear its ugly head again if no punitive action taken to stem it. Corrupted delegates would condone and endorse corrupted leaders who, holding the seat of power, would be weak to face the challenges of the