

## **A deranged doctor in the house**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**May 18, 2012**

**By Josh Hong**

Mahathir Mohamad may have been a dutiful and well-respected medical doctor back in the 1940s. But his decision to enter the political fray has - it's safe to say - turned out to be a sheer nightmare for the country as a whole.

Mahathir could have maintained his good reputation as a doctor, but his name is now ruined, forever associated with the Twin Towers of corruption and cronyism, his only solace being perhaps the personal wealth that he and his sons managed to accumulate when he was at the zenith of his tyrannical rule.

And the most pathetic thing about this old man is that he had a choice to become either a statesman or a rascal, but he has clearly opted to be remembered as a deranged veteran who refuses to believe the world around him has changed.

By any standards, Mahathir was an intelligent man among his contemporaries. Even Lee Kuan Yew found him a tough nut to crack.

Lee is an elite member of the old anglophile school who could easily quote a famous British judge to justify his own autocratic governance, but was confronted with tremendous difficulties in articulating his thoughts with the masses in Singapore's early days as an independent state. But Mahathir, himself from the top drawer of his time, was often able to return to the grassroots and arouse populist sentiment for his own cause when the going got tough.

Which makes it all the more tragic that the doctor has now become deranged in his own house. With Barisan Nasional appearing to lose power sooner or later, he is living in great fear of his own misdeeds and transgressions being laid bare under the Malaysian sun. Had Mahathir been a righteous and just-minded leader, he would not have to shudder constantly at the scenario of an alternative government, for his rectitude would remain intact, come what may.

But integrity is precisely what the doctor is short of. To pre-empt potential change of government, he is now working profusely to smear both the Bersih movement and the opposition by joining the government's chorus of vilification.

In fact, he is almost a lead singer!

Admittedly, Mahathir, who is single-handedly responsible for the erosion of the Malaysian judiciary does not see eye to eye with the Bar Council. The bad blood, however, came only from the doctor himself as he tried to 'fix' the judges as he did his own patients in Alor Star. His caustic remarks that the Bar Council has become a political party therefore only reveal his ineptitude in understanding the role of the legal fraternity.

Hence, it was a blessing that the colonial administration allegedly denied him a scholarship to read law in London!

Instead of hurling hollow accusations at the Bar Council, Mahathir should have the decency to admit as many as 90 percent of the judges, high-ranking police officers and “mainstream” journalists - especially those from *RTM*, *TV3*, *Utusan Malaysia*, *Berita Harian*, *The Star* and the *New Straits Times* - actually joined Umno and became his underlings after 1988.

Speaking truth to power

No, the Bar Council is not partisan. It just so happens that the current government is more often than not found to be on the wrong side of the law, and our lawyers are duty-bound to correct it. A Singaporean lawyer once told me how much she wished her colleagues back home would have the guts to speak truth to power like many of her Malaysian counterparts. This time on the Bersih 3.0 rally, the Malaysian Bar Council has again proven her right, of which I am indeed proud.

And Mahathir consistently refuses to accept the simple fact that Malaysians have different political identifications as rightful citizens. As far as he sees it, anyone who votes for the opposition is a bad Malaysian and less worthy, yet he ought to be told that not all who vote for Pas are religious “fanatics” and those who opt for the DAP are Chinese “chauvinists”. They simply want a government that is less corrupt, more honest and knows its limits.

My parents, for one, voted first the Barisan Sosialis Rakyat Malaya and then PAS throughout their lives, and did that make them racists or religious bigots? And how would “racists” like my parents have chosen PAS over either the MCA or the Chinese-dominated Gerakan in the first place? Can the doctor see the abject lack of logic in his view?

Simply put, Mahathir is now so paranoid and caught up with profound angst that he has lost all his senses, bent only on poisoning the minds of the Malays - young and old alike - with his race-centric rhetoric. Instead of championing greater transparency, public accountability and political integrity, he is going on an immoral crusade against anyone who simply wants to make Malaysia a better country to live in.

Which, in retrospect, was perhaps a reason why he was rejected by the colonial administration, for Mahathir just beats the British at their own game: divide and rule that is.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd  
Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/198347>