

What is it in a brother's rebuke?

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COMMENT In politics, friends can turn into foes, while foes can become friends overnight.

Who would have thought that former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has become the biggest critic to the present Premier Najib Abdul Razak, but in politics, anything can happen!

When you are in power, almost anyone will want to be your friend, but the moment you are out, you will be ignored.

But, a brother, especially a blood brother, will remain a brother, provided you take heed of his rebuke. The relationship with a blood brother is far more important than the ties one has with his friends, especially within the political arena.

As Johnny Cash put it in his song, "Blood is thicker than water"; but apparently, Najib has not given too much heed to his younger brother Nazir's rebuke even when Nazir meant well.

The chairperson of the CIMB Banking Group is already a familiar face and a well-respected figure in the corporate world. He is also known to be outspoken, and people do pay attention to whatever Nazir has to say, especially when it has even the slightest reference to Najib.

Nazir had earlier expressed his disappointment that 1MDB was not even present at a major InvestMalaysia event. Najib is the chairperson of the advisory board of 1MDB, an investment arm under the Finance Ministry.

Some examples

It does not appear to be a coincidence that Nazir had dropped hints time and again which put his elder brother in an awkward position.

This became more apparent when Najib's own siblings came out with a joint statement to protect their father's reputation, following an official statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to the New York Times claiming that Najib and his wife, Rosmah Mansor's lavish lifestyle is attributed to the inheritance Najib had received from his late father.

This has raised eyebrows especially amongst Najib's other siblings, because the statement had implied that their late father was earning money beyond the salaries of a prime minister in the seventies.

Most people who were personally affiliated to Abdul Razak Hussein would agree that Razak

was a frugal man. He would not have approved of his son's or daughter-in-law's allegedly extravagant lifestyle.

When former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad first attacked Najib, saying that he was alone in demanding answers on the 1MDB's alleged irregularities, Nazir posted on Instagram a picture of Michael Jackson's hit single 'You Are Not Alone'.

Nazir may have denied that it had anything to do with Dr Mahathir and his criticism, but his Instagram is just too 'coincidental' not to be interpreted as his own cynicism of his brother's lack of transparency in the 1MDB fund. It is hard for anyone following the 1MDB story not to ask what happened to the RM42 billion.

In another Instagram post, Nazir was also commenting about the importance of trust as an essential component in one's leadership, which was made almost immediately after Najib did not show up at the 'Nothing2Hide' dialogue session.

Even the Crown Prince of Johor Tunku Ismail took a jab at Najib, saying that Najib must have something to hide for his failure to appear at the meeting where Dr Mahathir took to the stage but was subsequently stopped by the police.

This, analysts say, is apparently Nazir's attempt to remind Najib that without the trust of the people, Najib is as good as gone. Yet, Najib has not taken the cue, instead allowed his men to further damage his own leadership.

Inspector-general of police Khalid Abu Bakar's attempt to cover for Najib had attracted criticisms from all corners.

All eyes on 1MDB

Currently, all eyes are on the 1MDB.

Even Nazir's latest comment on the delay of the 1MDB audit, which was due March 31, shows the younger sibling's attitude towards the elder brother. Again, Najib did not take the cue from his younger brother.

As chairperson of the advisory board, he should have immediately stepped in to ensure that 1MDB follows good corporate governance. No, Najib did not!

Therefore, Nazir was right in pointing out that, as a government-linked corporation, 1MDB has turned out to be an example of bad corporate governance which has now become the talk of the town.

After all, who would not be perplexed? Nazir wrote on Instagram: "I am perplexed why your (referring to 1MDB) March 2015 audit has not even started. How is this allowed? Has standards of GLC governance dropped so low?"

If 1MDB, which comes directly under Najib's own jurisdiction as both finance minister and chairperson of the advisory board, can get away with the need to audit its account, it can only happen when there is interference from someone with a high position.

On his own, Arul Kanda (photo) as chief executive officer of 1MDB would not be able to get away with any delay of the company audit, especially when 1MDB is under public scrutiny.

What about Rosmah?

Some analysts have interpreted this break of ties between Najib and his other siblings as caused by none other than Rosmah herself.

Within the Razak family, Rosmah would have stood out as a sore thumb. The last straw that broke the camel's back was apparently due to the PMO's statement to the New York Times.

Although very few people believed the PMO's statement, this had nonetheless damaged the reputation of the Razak family and their late father.

In short, Najib as the eldest son and now the prime minister of Malaysia, has allegedly failed to control his wife Rosmah's flamboyant lifestyle that has often put Najib in some very awkward situations.

Because as a brother, Nazir would have done his best to advise or even openly dropped hints, but Najib has yet to show signs that he is listening to the advice of the people who matter.

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