

Are Najib et al listening to the voice of conscience?

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COMMENT Amidst strong allegations that some RM2.6 billion had been funnelled into Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's personal accounts in AmPrivate Bank, one thing is clearly missing.

It is the God-given voice of conscience. The only person who has come close to having some conscience is Najib himself, who denied that he had "stolen" the people's money.

This is the guilty conscience at work. We say that the voice of conscience has pricked the culprit that he has to say something in order to silence his own guilty conscience.

For someone accused of taking the money, one can either hear the still voice of conscience and immediately admit that he had indeed stolen the money, or he will categorically deny it. After all, no thief - even one caught red handed - would admit that he has stolen his client's money, would he?

In any case, the voice of conscience will not be silenced at all. With time, it will grow louder, and even stronger, no matter how one tries to suppress it.

Najib's denial shows that at least the voice of conscience is doing its work. Compared to someone who is simply indifferent and continues on with life as if nothing has happened, at least Najib has responded to his own voice of conscience.

Strangely, some have remained absolutely silent. One would expect that at this crucial juncture in Najib's life, Rosmah Mansor would have spoken up. But strangely, Rosmah has not come to his defence. I wonder if there is anything cynical about this?

The others, of course, are fellow cabinet ministers (Paul Low, for instance, being the minister in charge of integrity) who neither spoke out in favour nor against Najib when such a strong allegation has turned the tide against Najib.

Implicated but...

Although he had denied stealing the money, Najib had indirectly admitted that the few accounts belonged to him and that he did not use the money for his personal gains.

In other words, he is opening the Pandora's Box, where more questions are being raised now: Was the money used to steal the elections? Does that mean that Umno and Barisan Nasional won the last general election by splashing out so much money? What about the money that was transferred into his account after the elections?

How was the money used? Who were the people benefiting from the money allegedly

transferred by the troubled 1MDB? Are these the people who are now coming to his defence for fear that they too may be implicated? The moment such a huge amount of money was detected, why did Bank Negara governor Zeti Akhtar Abdul Aziz (photo), as an independent party, not raise the alarm?

How is it that the money could go into one person's account, while some people could still be saying that it was all part of a red herring? We all agree that RM2.6 billion is not a small sum; it is equivalent to the amount of reserves that the entire state of Selangor had managed to accumulate during Khalid Ibrahim's time as menteri besar.

No conscience, not shameful

The rakyat are still willing to listen to Najib's explanation, provided he shows documented proof that he is not lying again. What the rakyat expect of a prime minister is one who would lead the nation with honesty and integrity, not someone for whom others have to come in his defence, but offering nothing but more hollow arguments.

In my opinion, those who had come to his defence hardly made any sense at all. For example, Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin said Najib did not have to go on leave while investigation is ongoing.

In any case, the sitting prime minister would still have the power to intervene, through a third party even, as long as he is still in office. If going on leave applies to even company executives during a probe, why should Najib be exempted?

Ask any corporate investigative body whether it is true that most criminal investigations can only be effective when the suspect is away for a long period of time. Khairy should do his homework before making such a comment, especially when the truth has yet to be unravelled.

Another minister, Rahman Dahlan (photo), in his typical style, also rubbished the WSJ report. In other words, he is oblivious of what is happening now in the country and of all persons, Rahman does not even qualify as a minister.

One of the worst that I have read so far is a defence coming from Deputy Agriculture and Agro-based Industries Minister Tajuddin Abdul Rahman who said that The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) never implicated Najib of wrongdoing.

We are not saying that Najib is a thief, but for Tajuddin to present his argument in this manner clearly shows a lack of conscience in the way he spoke.

Did he mean that Najib, despite such a huge amount of money allegedly transferred into his account by a third party, did not bother to even lodge a police report to kick-start the investigation?

Najib was not implicated by WSJ, but instead it was 1MDB. In short, Najib pretended that

nothing was unusual? This is effectively what Tajuddin had said, if you care to read in between the lines. Or is it not?

My question to Tajuddin is: Was Najib's name, after all, mentioned in the WSJ's most damning report by and large? Is Tajuddin talking to a kindergarten child?

Although I have mentioned in my earlier article that Najib should bring both WSJ and Sarawak Report to court, I know this is an impossibility. Doing this would mean that Najib would have to expose himself even more.

Otherwise, this would be Najib's best solution while he faces the escalating pressure for him to step down. The defence that he gets from his loyal supporters is clearly not working at all.

At best, it was merely trying to defend the indefensible.

Some sense

In this article, I choose not to mention what the opposition has to say about the WSJ report; otherwise, I could be accused of being biased.

One person who makes sense is Najib's own brother, Nazir Razak, who calls this the "Dark Political Times." At least, Nazir has put into perspective what is the urgent call of the day.

"In this darkest of political times," Nazir is quoted as saying, "we must remember to place the country and the rakyat first."

Another person who makes sense is former cabinet minister Zaid Ibrahim, who understood the political reality in this country. He, too, has urged Najib's resignation. This, in my opinion, is the best solution for Najib and for the country.

The coalition for clean and fair elections, Bersih, has also urged Najib's resignation. If he fails to answer how the money was used during the last general election, Bersih will mobilise the people to go to the streets.

Bersih chairperson Maria Chin Abdullah was quoted as saying by Star Online that "Bersih 4.0 will not be discounted if the investigations are not impartial".

Whatever it is, let the voice of conscience prevail. I guess news of that huge amount of money being channelled into one's personal accounts must be simply too mind-boggling for most people who had trusted Najib, such that they lose their bearing and go helter-skelter to defend the indefensible.

I just hope that Najib can become transparent and silence all his critics. I wish him all the best, and that his public relations mogul would do a better job in providing plausible answers to the Malaysian public.

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