

My advice to Najib in facing 1MDB outrage

MalaysiaKini.com

July 15, 2015

By Steve Oh

COMMENT Internet websites are abuzz with news on the 1MDB scandal and the credibility crisis the government faces mounts with no convincing resolution in the offing.

When CIMB chairperson Nazir Razak recently opined that Malaysians face “dark political times”, it struck a chord with many Malaysians and I suggested why I think our once promising country risks becoming the new “sick man of Asia”.

Today more countries face “dark political times” and financial ruin because of corruption.

Greece is the latest casualty. I saw the early warning signs during a past visit to that country, and feel a sense of déjà vu when observing the same disturbing symptoms inherent in Malaysia today - a once promising and peaceful country becoming like the Philippines during the Marcos era.

A government can be the country's worst enemy when it causes it to go broke. No one can say it won't happen to Malaysia.

In fact, Malaysia fits the profile of a vulnerable nation. That is why a major scandal like the 1MDB has to be urgently resolved. There is no resolution until the people are satisfied no one is guilty of any wrongdoing or anyone found guilty jailed.

For Prime Minister Najib Razak, who is facing serious allegations of wrongdoing, to feel confident of his innocence but seemingly not willing to put himself through the litmus test of unconditional scrutiny does not help his personal standing and credibility.

There is a time for elegant silence but not when crucial questions need answers. The cabinet is unconvincingly coy and gratuitously tacit. The few ministers who openly ask for investigation are exceptional and they are acting responsibly. Indeed, leaders not leading are found wanting.

If I were the accused I will even go the second mile and volunteer to step aside from my normal duties and take official leave so that the investigators will be able to conduct their investigations without fear or favour and not have the constraint of reporting to me or worry about my looking over their shoulders because I am still their boss.

Caught napping

Nothing is as unconvincing as a task force composed of familiar faces who were part of the problem because they were caught napping or did not sound the alarm.

“It may ‘take a thief to catch a thief’ but the people will believe me not my accuser,

especially my former boss who has been like a monkey on my back with his own private agenda.

“Has anyone asked him about the ‘missing 100 billion ringgit’ when he was doing my job and who I suspect is trying to get me replaced with his puppet? I am not like other leaders who are guilty of double-talk and deceit.

“Their dishonesty was exposed. Bill Clinton said, ‘I did not have sex with that woman’ but had to come clean with a public confession that he lied before the American public. The late Richard Nixon, was another impeached and disgraced American leader in the Watergate scandal. The harder they resisted telling the truth, the harder they fell from grace.

“That's the fate of dishonest leaders, not mine. Everyone knows I walk the talk. Everyone can trust me. What more do they want?”

So much for story-telling. I'm not the one accused.

The reality however is the future of a prime minister cannot be more important than the country's national interest. It is unwise to prolong and embroil the country's leadership in allegations of corrupt dealings that compromise the integrity of the government and even national security.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), Bank Negara, the police, the Auditor-General's Office, and other concerned enforcement agencies, including the tax office, must vindicate their roles and conduct separate and unrestricted investigations.

It is unwise to place all the investigative eggs in one basket especially when former top cops have complained of political interference. An investigation has to be above suspicion or it defeats the purpose.

A special task force composed of credible investigators with the right credentials, free of political influence, is better tasked with giving the nation the truth on the controversial The Wall Street Journal story about RM2.6 billion allegedly in Najib's bank accounts.

Fresh honest faces will dispel the usual criticisms of political largesse, patronage and cronyism that may taint the integrity of investigations. All the separate investigations ought to arrive at a similar conclusion based on the facts.

It is after all a criminal investigation, not a political witch-hunt.

The final straw

There are times when politics can be bad for a nation because politicians place personal interests above national welfare. Their corrupt dealings will send the government broke. The 1MDB expose should be the final straw that breaks the camel's back.

Since former PM Dr Mahathir Mohamad promised to give the nation a “clean, efficient and trustworthy” government 33 years ago, the nation has been sliding down the slippery slope. “The proof is in the pudding,” as he would say.

After incumbent PM Najib promised to transform the nation into “the world's best democracy” and abolish the Sedition Act, the country has seen more and more citizens charged for sedition.

Is it because a scandalised leader running a dysfunctional political system makes for a sick nation?

But replacing the leader in a vicious a cycle of ‘misfits’ without changing the dysfunctional system that engenders the ‘rotten administration’ and the ‘police state’ is no panacea. Mahathir rues his mistakes in anointing the leaders but repeats them. Recycling tainted leaders merely recycles the problems.

Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is gone from Putrajaya, but has the ‘rotten administration’ and the ‘police state’? Business is still as usual with corruption and scandals.

Malaysia in a moral crisis needs honest men and women to stand in the gap for their country and oppose the corrupt and hollow men and women who think being in power exempts them from criminal prosecution.

My conviction is corrupt leaders and a corrupt political system are incompatible with good governance. And bad governance results in suffering of the masses when a country runs out of money.

The cruel fate of failed nations can be avoided for Malaysia.

Honesty is still the country's best hope and path and there are good men and women still in the country who can deliver good governance.

Corrupt leaders and the corrupt system must come to an end. The guilty must be punished. Otherwise there is no other outcome except more scandals and the inevitable financial ruin.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/305185>