

The prime minister needs to walk the talk

MalaysiaKini.com

Aug 10, 2015

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COMMENT I read with much amusement of what Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak had addressed to his party members in Cheras, recently. He claimed so to speak that he is not a party president who wants all Umno leaders to behave as 'yes man' to him.

("But I am a president who wants our party to be disciplined. To hold on to party principles")

"We can change our views or argue in a meeting; if we want to bang the table we can also do so, just do not throw the chairs. But when the party makes a decision, we have to stand behind the collective responsibility," he was quoted as saying in a report by Bernama.

The prime minister said even though party leaders and members might disagree over a certain matter that had been decided, it could be renegotiated.

"I am not an autocratic person. Ask Ku Nan (Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor), he also disagrees sometimes, but he remained as secretary-general," he said.)

However, I am inclined to ask what does he mean by his statements.

This is because the recent cabinet reshuffling saw Najib ousting his deputy Muhyiddin Yassin from the cabinet line-up.

It is a fact that Muhyiddin had been critical of Najib's decisions and had questioned the controversial national investment fund 1MDB. So much so that even the Prime Minister's Office chided his decision to be outspoken about the matter in the days leading to his ousting from the cabinet.

It is clear, Muhyiddin was not a 'yes man'. Why then was he removed from the cabinet ?

On the contrary, newly-appointed Communications and Multimedia Minister Salleh Said Keruak (photo) had been supportive of Najib over 1MDB issue right from the get go. The then-Sabah speaker was tireless in his typing out his views and publishing them via his blog.

Lo and behold, Salleh was appointed a minister instead.

I am not privy to Umno meetings chaired by Najib nor any other Umno meeting for that matter. However this still smells strongly of hypocrisy.

Despite Muhyiddin's disagreement over the matter, was the issue renegotiated to the point he had to lose his cabinet post?

Or did Muhyiddin ask the wrong questions, which caused himself and his allies posts in the cabinet?

It is not about financial transparency in parties

The RM2.6 billion issue in Prime Minister Najib's account has been taken out of context by the Umno president himself.

When details were furnished that the sum of monies were donated anonymous by someone by the Middle East for party expenditure, Najib was quick to turn the tables against the opposition parties.

This by stating his willingness to reveal Umno's accounts and challenging PKR, DAP and PAS to do same. While each party has responded promptly, with PKR deputy president Mohamed Azmin Ali and Selangor DAP chairperson Tony Pua stating their respective parties willingness to do so, it amuses to know that the controversial amount of money discussed by the people today was unknown to many Umno members.

Following the expose by Muhyiddin and party vice-president Shafie Apdal, who is also a member of the Umno supreme council, that they too were clueless about the donation until it first surfaced has opened more scrutiny towards the premier.

While PKR welcomes Najib's urging to be transparent about Umno's accounts, perhaps he as a leader should emulate his urging in being transparent on his personal bank accounts.

After all it was his personal account in Ambank that was exposed by the Wall Street Journal and not Umno's accounts instead. Answer the questions that have long been bogged down in the minds of the rakyat, including your No 2 in the party.

The ball is in your court, prime minister.

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