

**It's indeed Rosmah who 'wears the pants'**  
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COMMENT It has been a mere 18 months since Najib Abdul Razak became the sixth prime minister of Malaysia and the rakyat is witnessing a 'phenomenon' - the hand that is actually wielding power is that of his wife, Rosmah Mansor.

Rosmah has taken the liberty of interfering and getting involved in matters beyond her territory, thus making Malaysians unanimous about this one fact - it is Rosmah who 'wears the pants'.

azlanThere are many past examples to cite to lend credibility to the claim that Rosmah a.k.a. the 'first lady', surely wears the pants and that, too, unabashedly.

When Najib took over the country's leadership from Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on April 3, 2009, the moment was happiest for none other than Rosmah, who, through her 'pick-and-choose' attitude, fast went on to become the least-liked personality in the people's eyes.

When Najib started his own blog to interact with the rakyat, Rosmah too got her official site, a move that alluded to the fact that she wanted a 'role' to play as the prime minister's wife.

When compared with former United States president Bill Clinton's wife Hillary Clinton, who was said to be the one wearing the pants, Rosmah had then replied, "No, I am not going to be a Hillary Clinton. As the first lady, I can comment on other things but I do not want to get involved in politics and governing the country." That was on July 8, 2009.

A year on and Rosmah is 'busy' singing a different tune. Barely four days after Najib took over the country's helm from Abdullah, it was reported that Permata was given RM150 million and it would set up 300 centres nationwide. Does Rosmah intend to clarify how this became possible in such a short, short time?

Far from not disturbing the administration of the country, Rosmah has gone overboard by dictating to television stations what they should and should not do. She decides which foreign celebrity should be invited on taxpayers' money to pay a friendly visit to Malaysia. It appears that the agenda here is not to serve the people but to go down in Malaysian history as the most glamorous and patronising wife of a prime minister.

NONEIt was also Rosmah who decided to play politics in Hulu Selangor by promising its people that a Permata centre would be built there should Barisan Nasional win the parliamentary seat in the by-election in April.

BN won and six months have since passed but there is no sight of the Permata centre. Rosmah's excuse for the delay is that a suitable piece of land has yet to be found.

Who gave Rosmah the liberty to make such promises to the people of Hulu Selangor? If she is taking the voters for granted, Rosmah is in for a rude surprise.

'Stop interfering, Rosmah'

Rosmah's ability to cakap tak serupa bikin (not preach what she practises) is typical, for

after all she is the wife of a prime minister who spent the prime of his life and beyond playing politics.

Rosmah had made it clear she would not interfere with the administration of the country and again conveniently went back on her word by inviting American actor Robert De Niro for a visit to Malaysia when she met this award-winning actor at an event in New York in April this year. Three months later, in July, De Niro turned up on Malaysian shores to please Rosmah.

NONE For Rosmah, extending the invitation to De Niro (right) was to allow him "to see the other side of Malaysia".

De Niro had told Rosmah, "You are very progressive, you are very engaging. I would like to come to your country."

To which the flattered Rosmah replied, "Please come because otherwise you would listen to all the wrong things about Malaysia. It is important to put things in the right perspective."

Sounds like some tacky movie dialogue. From a citizen of this country to Rosmah: If you were and are genuine about putting things in the right perspective, you would not have wasted the rakyat's money inviting De Niro for a lavish stay here.

If indeed setting things right is your agenda, you would waste no time in dirtying your hands and feet attending to the cries of the Penan women who for years have been harassed and raped by timber loggers. You would have spared no effort in ensuring the Penan women go on to lead a life free of fear, threats and violence.

azlan You would have put to good use your responsibility as the wife of the prime minister to protect your sisters from continuously becoming victims to sexual predators in their own homeland. Regrettably, you never lifted a finger to lend support to these women in spite of their turning to you for help.

If asking De Niro to travel to Malaysia was to put things in the right perspective, then Rosmah has done it wrong, but so is interfering in the business of the Tourism Ministry and its offices abroad.

What has the Malaysian ambassador to the US been doing to make sure no "wrong things about Malaysia" are heard by Americans? Is the ambassador concerned not paid to "put things in the right perspective" by making sure he presents a balanced picture of what Malaysia is all about?

Taking the rakyat for granted

By bringing a foreign celebrity here, what has Rosmah achieved? By not coming to Malaysia, how would De Niro have heard all the wrong things about Malaysia - who is maligning Malaysia according to Rosmah?

Why did she not liaise with Tourism Malaysia's office there and engage the Malaysian ambassador to the US, Jamaluddin Jarjis, to work at promoting Malaysia to Americans? If the ambassador has been complacent, he should be taken to task.

NONE Since Rosmah was so concerned about the likes of De Niro listening to the wrong things about Malaysia, it is only befitting that she then assumes or takes over the

responsibility of promoting all things Malaysia from Tourism Minister Ng Yen Yen, who by the way has spent a fortune on her so-called official trips abroad?

By hinting that there is a tendency for foreigners to "listen to all the wrong things about Malaysia", Rosmah is saying that Tourism Malaysia has failed in promoting Malaysia abroad. That being the case, it is best that she takes over the promotion of Malaysia since, among others, Rosmah enjoys travelling the world?

No matter how much of the taxpayers' money she wastes, Rosmah cannot refute or change history; she cannot erase the May 13, 1969 incident from the annals of Malaysian history nor can she deny that race relations in Malaysia are not at an all-time high.

She cannot be in denial about the fact that Malaysia has not been able to get rid of its corruption and Rosmah definitely cannot ignore the fact that Malaysia is among the countries which have a poor record of upholding human rights and this includes that of migrant workers and refugees.

Is Rosmah interested in some real work?

There is much Rosmah can do to help improve the lives of Malaysians but she has chosen not to. She was the least affected by the cries of rape from the Penan women, just as she cannot be bothered about issues like sexual harassment at the workplace and how the Labour Department director-general, Ismail Abdul Rahim, has trivialised the need for a Sexual Harassment Act.

She would have wasted no time in offering financial help to ailing veteran artistes who once made the country proud through their talent.

Rosmah used up a massive RM24 million for a three-day First Ladies Summit held last month. Ironically, the summit was themed 'A Child Today, A Leader Tomorrow' but it was a failure because it was nothing more than a platform for Rosmah to regale in narcissistic splendour and all that at the expense of the taxpayers.

If she did have the welfare of children at heart, Rosmah would have responded to the pleas from the Penan Support Group (a coalition of 36 NGOs) for pre-schools to be set up in the interior of Sarawak for the Penan children.

To worsen matters, Rosmah confirmed that Malaysia would once again host the biennial First Ladies Summit in 2012.

At a press conference this year, Rosmah made it known that under the plan to empower the Permata programme nationwide, national childcare centres would be set up this year in three parliamentary constituencies in all states except Terengganu and Sarawak. She knows fully well the need for pre-schools in the interiors of Sarawak but blatantly ignored their need. Why the discrimination?

If indeed the objective of the First Ladies Summit is to nurture the minds of the children, why have the Penan children not been included? If Rosmah is familiar with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), she must know that including one child at the expense of another is not what the MDGs espouse.

What really interests Rosmah?

It seems too much to ask of this 'first lady' who is busy jet-setting to help crusade on urgent issues back home such as organ donation by pledging her organs and setting an example for others. Asking Rosmah to champion animal rights and fight for a tougher Animals Act might perhaps end up earning her wrath.

Turning to her for help to support the marginalised communities is perhaps regarded as an insult by Rosmah.

So what exactly does this 'first lady' find it worth her while, besides promoting her pet project Permata? Was the lavish First Ladies Summit her only real interest?

If Rosmah found the summit's findings important enough to personally hand over the declaration to United Nations secretary-general Ban Kim Moon, why has she then failed to realise the urgency of attending to the issue of rape of the Penan women? Why did Rosmah not say a word in support of the rape survivors? Does she have some vested interest which needs safeguarding, leading to her keeping mum?

There is lots of real work that needs to be done and only if Rosmah is sincere enough in dirtying her hands can she get the job done. Can she spare some time to visit public places like the Klang bus station and witness how senior citizens have to stand for hours to wait for their respective buses as there are no seating places made available for them?

rosmah new york times first lady 150610Does Rosmah dare walk down the streets to see how poorly the bus-stops are lit and how dirty and unlit the pedestrian bridges are?

Rosmah's so-called classy disposition has failed her in becoming the people's voice. It is not too late for her to engage in both introspection and retrospection and work at becoming the best, for the people's sake. For the real work to make sure foreigners do not "listen to all the bad things about Malaysia" lies back home. Bringing in a foreigner will do nothing to improve matters.

Reality dictates that Rosmah must do all she can to make sure Malaysians get what they rightfully deserve and then and only then will there be no wrong things said about Malaysia's administration, provided Rosmah has the love for the rakyat and a sincere heart to improve their lives. She must keep in mind that virtues like equality, justice, truth and respect are the cornerstone of a nation's success, not thuggery and deceit.

The late Martin Luther King Jr put it well when he said, "We are prone to judge success by the index of our salaries or the size of our automobiles, rather than by the quality of our service and relationship to humanity."

Perhaps Rosmah can take a cue from the words of the late Reverend King.

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