

Najib, tell Rosmah we don't need an Imelda
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Dear YAB Dato' Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak,

In the next few days from now when Umno general assembly is convened, you will be officially appointed the sixth prime minister of Malaysia, a position that your father once held. Many say that you bear no resemblance to your father - in character, personality and style; especially with regards to managing your work.

I suppose it will not be fair to liken you to your father because of the environment in which you were brought up is vastly different from that of your father's. You never had the taste of kampung life, like bathing in the river, playing in the paddy fields and having to study your school books under a kerosene light.

How fortunate are you to have been raised among the higher echelon of society, to attend some of the finest schools and finally to be sent abroad to complete your tertiary education in the UK. It is therefore not surprising that you have a slight English accent when you speak the language.

Your rise in politics was phenomenal and even Khairy Jamaluddin cannot match it. At the age of 27 years, you are already the menteri besar of Pahang, the youngest ever. Thereafter, you have held various positions in government and have also been the longest being defence minister.

I have been told that you have done a lot for the armed forces and there is no denying that your concern has been the welfare of the soldiers. Today, the armed forces are better housed, given good salaries and allowances, a better education and the three armed services are better equipped.

Of late, I have begun to take pity for you. Not that you are an incapable leader, but you seem not to understand the mood of the people. I think you have insulated yourself and the people that surround you are like barricades that make you appear aloof.

Even the stern-looking police bodyguards that accompany you everywhere have made you look like a caged lion that is untouchable and beyond reach. How could you, a national leader understand the people if you allow yourself to be 'caged in' like this?

Now on a more serious note. There is already a rising tide of public anger against Umno, and you in particular, and I don't know whether you are aware of this. Every where I go and every time I sit to talk to people, the discussion will surely be centered on you.

I believe this stems from the persistent accusations against you (you know what there are) that must have influenced the minds of many to believe that the accusations are true. Hence, they say that because of these accusations, you are not suitable to lead the country.

This view does not come Umno members, but from the ordinary people in the streets, including some who had voted for you. While I personally don't dispute your capabilities to lead, you will need a lot of soul-searching to re-build your image. And how could you possibly do this? Please open your heart to what I have to say in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, rid yourself of all those people that have insulated you. If you know them to be corrupt and have enriched themselves through your patronage, evict them, or better still report them to the MACC.

Select people who are sincere, honest and god-fearing to be close to you. With such people around you, it will help you build your image. Get close to your mother and constantly seek her advice and blessings.

Secondly, constantly listen to the people. This can be done by you taking a casual walk regularly along the streets to meet and talk directly with the people. I bet the people have lots of things to say to you and these is honest and sincere talk.

Don't just listen to your supporters and party members because most are persistent and cogent liars. But in your round of talks with the people on the street, please do not let your bodyguards 'cage' you.

Thirdly, please tell your wife Rosmah to stop being extravagant and to cease acting like Imelda Marcos. I am told that she has a penchant for shopping every time she is abroad and brings home loads of items. I am not questioning, nor am I interested as to who pays for her shopping.

But my concern is the talk that 'she only points and others pay' for the items. This is not good for your image too, and certainly the mak cik and the pak cik do not like her to show off her extravagance. Seriously, ask her to show her generosity and compassion by helping the orphans and the old folks.

Ask her to regularly visit these unfortunate people and occasionally have a meal with them. Tell her not to look snobbish, dress casually and to show a face that is friendly and likeable.

Fourthly, we know that you have many friends (including relatives) that are in business. These are the people that will stick with you like a leech when you become the prime minister, and they are the people that are most likely to destroy you.

Disassociate from them now if you are serious in wanting to end corruption that is so mired in our society today. Pledge to MACC your fullest support should there be cases under investigation affecting people in high places that you know personally. Don't you make any statement. Let the MACC do it.

Fifth, your boss Pak Lah is perceived to be a weak leader, constantly in denial and seems unable to make firm and strong decisions. You also had the advantage of having to serve Dr Mahathir Mohamad and surely you can take some useful lessons from both of them. You know better than I do that governing a nation is not like managing a family. Popular but weak is not what you should be.

Decisiveness, firmness, openness and more importantly, your willingness to seek and listen to the views of others concerning important national issues is a must. Do not make the mistake that Pak Lah made ie, to consult his own advisors that happen to be his family members. That's what people say and you should know this better than me.

Sixth, try not to be confrontational with the opposition leaders. You should open yourself to discussions with them. Set aside political differences and interests. You have a nation to govern and surely your interest must be to serve the people first regardless of their political

affiliations.

Surely the opposition leaders must have something to share and contribute to the betterment of the nation so why not get them to share it with you. It doesn't matter if their ideas are not in line with your aspirations but at least you will have established a dialogue with them and this can lessen unnecessary politicking.

The above are but some of the issues that I wish you to know immediately. It does not really matter for me if you choose to ignore all that I have written. I wrote this letter with very clear conscience and to say to you what I and many others are concern about ie, the betterment of our nation.

The period following the March 8, 2008 general elections has certainly not been good for the country and is being made worse now with the global economic recession.

The excessive politicking by leaders from both sides of the political divide that we hear daily is only drawing the country into deeper problems. And who suffers? It is the people whom you, upon taking your oath of office in April, will pledge to serve despite their political affiliations.

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