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Unfair for Mahathir to ask Abdullah to step down now

WHILE I have much respect and admiration for Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad for having brought us out of the woods into the open during his 22 years as prime minister, what is happening in the political scene now has much to do with him as much as the present leaders. He is as much to be praised and as to be blamed for all the happenings. As prime minister, he was never soft towards anyone and anything to ensure his visions come to reality. Anyone who comes into his way will have to face his wrath.

I am all for his calls for reforms within Umno. The party cannot survive the onslaught unless it reforms. One way to reform is to go back to the grassroots and ensure they are well taken care of. Never neglect them for if that happens like it happened at the last general election, from a dominant party Umno suddenly becomes so irrelevant that it is hard even for its allies to swallow. What is needed now is for Umno to focus on rebuilding its image so drastically that even those young and middle-class Malays who are Umno members but voted for the Opposition will feel so guilty for having done so that they will surely vote Umno back into power at the next general election.

Although Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is perceived to be weak and is to be blamed for the Barisan Nasional's fiasco of the last election, he must be given another chance to redeem himself. Through his constant calls for Pak Lah to resign, Mahathir is not playing the game fairly. Malaysians still remember when Tun cried on the podium at an Umno General Assembly and wanted to resign. Everyone backed him and urged him to stay on. Within hours, he reversed his

decision and stayed on. What happened then was no different to what is happening to Pak Lah now. Whilst Tun had the love and the backing of the people then, we should do the same for Pak Lah now.

Pak Lah is facing a trying moment and this is when he needs us most. We must not desert him now. In fact, those who call for Pak Lah to step down are the ones who are directly or indirectly responsible for the turnaround of Umno's fortune.

Tun calls for the people to voice more of their discontentment now and not be afraid to do so. Even when Pak Lah says to the people to voice their opinions more so long as it does not run foul of the law, the people are still afraid to do so. This is the legacy that Tun left us with. During his tenure, anyone who dared to speak against him would face the might of the Internal Security Act (ISA). The same is happening now for the hideous law is still in force and there are still many people who are detained under this Act. So Tun has no basis to call for the people to voice out more now as it is his legacy that has shut the mouths of hundreds and thousands of people. He subjugated the people through this law and unfortunately it is still being practised.

If Pak Lah is to be made responsible to the setbacks of the ruling parties during the last general election, then Tun must be responsible for having made it more difficult for Pak Lah to rule. Tun has much to apologise to the people as Pak Lah,

If he says Pak Lah is no longer the right person to rule the country then he is as much to be blamed for it was he who chose Pak Lah to succeed him.

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