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I was the US ambassador, and I was not going to stand there - and just go play golf - when my country was attacked unfairly. But actually, I also understood how upset Mahathir was about what had happened to his country's economy - and why he chose to lash out and blame America for what had happened.

Even though I grimaced when Mahathir spoke ill of my country, I still had respect then (and I still do now) for what that he did for over 20 years to promote Malaysia's economic development and raise its stature in the world. Now Najib has destroyed everything that Mahathir accomplished.

Mugabe-land

I think I know both Mahathir's strengths and his warts. I have studied and followed him for over 20 years. If I were Mahathir, I would be concerned about my legacy. I would be concerned that everything I accomplished during my years as prime minister is now being destroyed - by Najib.

Today Malaysia has become, as I said, Mugabe-land. It was not the country that Mahathir dreamed for - and worked for. I recognise how Mahathir subverted Malaysia's political institutions to achieve his goals for the nation. But in his mind, he did it for Malaysia, not to enrich himself. Agree or disagree, that clearly is very different from the incredible kleptocracy that we see today under Najib.

Today people are out to make as much money for themselves as they can, regardless of what happens to their country. Yes, Mahathir had his sycophants. He was very susceptible to flattery. But he also had some very intelligent and competent ministers, with whom I was privileged to work and engage. He "ran a very tight ship."

But today?

Najib's movie producer stepson Riza Aziz is famous for the movie 'The Wolf of Wall Street', which the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) says was produced with money stolen from the Malaysian people.

Riza also produced a movie called 'Dumb and Dumber, Too'. How appropriate. Dumb and Dumber. Because it seems that under Najib, his ministers are competing with each other to see who can "out-dumb" each other. Their number one concern is loyalty, sycophancy, and making sure that they can keep on making money. So yes, I am willing to give Mahathir a chance - a BIG chance. I hope that he can "Save Malaysia," which Najib is now destroying. But there have to be conditions.

- 1) Mahathir - and the movement or political party he creates - must call for Anwar's release from prison.
- 2) He must call for dropping all the sedition and other political charges that Najib has filed against other opposition political figures.