

Sabah minister told US diplomats Pak Lah 'not an intellectual'
The Malaysian Insider
August 14, 2011
By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 17 — A member of Sabah's Cabinet disparaged then Prime Minister Tun Abdullah Badawi for being "slow" and "not an intellectual," according to a leaked United States diplomatic cable.

The cable sent to Washington from the embassy here said that Datuk Masidi Manjun took several swipes in late 2006 at his own party president, relaying a joke made by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad that poked fun at Khairy Jamaluddin, Abdullah's son-in-law.

"While making unsolicited comments about Abdullah's public image and job performance, Sabah's Minister of Youth and Sports, Masidi Manjun, told us, 'Abdullah (picture) is not an intellectual and is a bit slow in his thinking,'" said the diplomatic note.

The document leaked by whistleblower site Wikileaks and made available on the Malaysia Today news portal, added that Masidi, now in charge of tourism, culture and environment in Datuk Seri Musa Aman's state government, said that the then Umno president was "getting bad advice from his inner circle."

"Manjun... told us of a private comment made by former PM Mahathir during a recent trip to Japan. Mahathir reportedly told a senior Japanese politician, "Japan is the home of the rising sun, and Malaysia is home to the rising son-in-law," said the cable penned by David Shear, then deputy chief of mission at the embassy in Kuala Lumpur.

Khairy Jamaluddin, who has since risen from Umno Youth deputy chief to head the wing, was said to be part of the infamous "Fourth Floor boys" who had his father-in-law's ear.

Masidi's reported comments came at a time when the influential Dr Mahathir began to step up criticism of his successor, who was said to be dismantling the legacy of Malaysia's longest-serving prime minister.

Dr Mahathir's influence over the majority Malay population was seen to have been a key factor in the swing against the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) in the 2008 election, which saw Abdullah's government shrink from 198 MPs to just 140.

His loss of BN's customary two-thirds hold of Parliament and five state governments led to his resignation in April 2009.

The Malaysian Insider
Copyright © 2011 The Malaysian Insider
Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/sabah-minister-told-us-diplo-mats-pak-lah-not-an-intellectual/>