

DR MAHATHIR WANTS NAJIB TO DO WHAT HE SAYS, NOT DO WHAT HE DOES

Malaysia Today

January 16, 2016

By Super Admin

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THE CORRIDORS OF POWER

Raja Petra Kamarudin

In his Blog posting yesterday, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said:

There is currently a deficit in terms of trust in the present Government and its institutions. There are many reasons for this deficit. Saying that everything is fine will get the Government nowhere. Deeds count more than words.

The removal of Tan Sri Abu Kassim will only convince the people that all that is being said against the Government is true, that it exist merely to prevent the rule of law being applied to the leadership of the nation.

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Since Dr Mahathir retired on 31st October 2003 he has been taking the moral high ground in preaching good governance to, first, Prime Minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and, now, to Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak. While it is good that we have a 'statesman' telling the present government what it should and should not do, we need someone who practices (or used to practice) what he preaches to do that.

Dr Mahathir first captured national attention when he wrote his book *The Malay Dilemma* and then called for the ouster of Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman because, according to Dr Mahathir, the Chinese are taking over the country. Dr Mahathir blamed the Tunku for this and he accused the Tunku of being a Chinese lover who would rather spend his time playing cards with his Chinese friends than focus on looking after the welfare of the Malays.

Against the backdrop of 'May 13' when sentiments were still riding high, a 'Malay nationalism' (some even say 'racist') platform such as that would certainly go down well with the Malays in Umno. After all, the 'wounds' of May 13 had still not properly healed so anyone who stands on a Malay nationalism platform would definitely have an audience.

About a decade later Dr Mahathir took over as Prime Minister and the non-Malays braced themselves for a civil war. This was the man who had blamed the plight of the Malays on the non-Malays so surely he was going to address the imbalance by punishing the Chinese and Indians. But the Chinese and Indians received a pleasant surprise. Instead of robbing the Chinese and Indians of their wealth to give it to the Malays, Dr Mahathir actually made the rich Chinese and Indians even richer, and millionaires were turned into billionaires.

When Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah challenged Dr Mahathir for the Umno presidency six years later there was little doubt that Malaysia was going to see a new Prime Minister. But then, yet again, Dr Mahathir (or at least his people did) played the race card by spreading the story that Ku Li was in cahoots with Chinese tycoons (they said Ku Li was Ku Kay's running dog — meaning Khoo Kay Peng) and that if he became Prime Minister the Chinese were going to take over the country. Invariably Ku Li lost the party election.

And then Dr Mahathir went on to make even more Chinese and Indians richer.

Somehow the Umno Malays were not too perturbed. The Chinese and Indians, however, were — although those who Dr Mahathir made rich were their fellow Chinese and Indians. Of course, it is not that Malays did not get rich as well. However, in most cases, behind almost all the rich and successful Malays were non-Malays. In short, Dr Mahathir turned the Ali Baba culture into an art form. Actually it was not Ali Baba as much as it was Ali Baba Muthu because Indians were not exempt from the arrangement.

One Dr Mahathir loyalist once told me back in the 1980s that you must not listen to what Dr Mahathir says — instead, you must observe what he does. This reminds me of my teacher in the Victoria Institution back in 1965 when he caught me smoking. He summoned me to the canteen and lectured me on the ills of smoking. He was smoking as he lectured me and when he noticed that I was looking at the cigarette in his hand he said, "You must listen to what I say, not do what I do."

This was the same teacher who taught us in swimming class. When I told him I did not know how to swim he threw me into the deep end of the pool and said, "Swim or drown!" It took me three minutes and probably a few gallons of water in my stomach but I immediately learned how to swim because I was not yet ready to die.

Anyway, what Dr Mahathir taught me is that he may say something but that does not mean he means what he says. He will just say something to suit the occasion and do the exact opposite when the occasion demands it. This is called Machiavellian politics and is what realpolitik is all about. And that was why Dr Mahathir survived 22 years in spite of being challenged so many times while all the other Prime Ministers did not.

Dr Mahathir talked about trust deficit in his Blog posting yesterday. Actually the trust deficit started back in 1998 when he made his move on Anwar Ibrahim. In the 1999 general election Barisan Nasional would have taken a beating had Dr Mahathir not, yet again, played the race card. And that was why only the Malays voted opposition while the Chinese and Indians did not — because they feared a ‘May 13 Version 2’ if Barisan Nasional lost, or even just lost its two-thirds majority in Parliament.

The ‘trust deficit’ deteriorated even further in 2008 when Dr Mahathir attacked Abdullah Badawi. And now Dr Mahathir is attacking Najib. So, of course, there is going to be yet a further deterioration in trust deficit. But Dr Mahathir is acting as if it is Najib’s fault. Dr Mahathir refuses to accept the fact that he is the cause of this trust deficit — back in 1999, in 2008, and now.

Dr Mahathir then laments the removal of certain people in the government. He said that if Najib removes these people then it would convince the rakyat that the allegations against the government and the Prime Minister are true. So I suppose what he means is that Najib should not remove anyone, even if they try to sabotage his government, to ‘prove’ that the allegations are false.

This, again, contradicts what Dr Mahathir himself did when he was in power. In 1988 he removed all his critics in Umno by closing down the party and by setting up a new party without allowing his critics to join the new party.

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Removing people has been Dr Mahathir’s trademark. And when I started going to Australia and the US and contacted the British and European Parliaments to campaign for Anwar (just like what Khairuddin Abu Hassan and Matthias Chang did), Dr Mahathir ‘removed’ me by detaining me under ISA.

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Source: <http://www.malaysia-today.net/dr-mahathir-wants-najib-to-do-what-he-says-not-do-what-he-does/>