

## **FOR SURE, MAHATHIR IS NO KUAN YEW**

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**By MT Webmaster**

*Mahathir thinks he is the equivalent of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew. So he wants his son, Mukhriz, to emulate General Lee Hsien Loong. Unfortunately Mahathir is no Kuan Yew and Mukhriz is in a totally different world to General Lee. And that is what happens when you overrate yourself and your son and lose track of reality.*

### **THE CORRIDORS OF POWER**

***Raja Petra Kamarudin***

I prepared the comparison (below) between Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Lee Kuan Yew — and also between Mukhriz Mahathir and Goh Chok Tong/General Lee Hsien Loong — so that you can grasp what I am about to say.

You can start by looking at General Lee's academic background and 13 years military career before he entered politics in 1984 at age 32.

General Lee was groomed for 33 years, including 14 years as Deputy Prime Minister, before he became Singapore's Prime Minister. And the mentor tasked with the job of grooming him, Goh Chok Tong, was himself handpicked from the private sector and groomed by Lee Kuan Yew for 13 years from 1977 to 1990 before he became Singapore's Prime Minister for 14 years.

Lee Kuan Yew made sure that his son's training to take over the leadership of Singapore started early, after 13 years of military training. By the time Hsien Loong was 32 he was already in government and at age 38 he was the Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore and Singapore's third Prime Minister by the time he was 52.

All told, Hsien Loong had 33 years of training before he eventually took over the leadership of Singapore. And he had good teachers and mentors who moulded him in the way a leader should be moulded, something as rare as a three-legged chicken in Malaysia.

Mukhriz Mahathir, however, had only five years of training as a mere Deputy Minister (where he did nothing much to shout about other than warm his seat). And then in 2013 Mahathir pushed him to become the next Prime Minister — which was why Mukhriz contested an Umno Vice President's post in 2013, the first step to the Umno Deputy Presidency (which was supposed to have happened by now) and then the Presidency cum Prime Minister by 2020 or so, after the 2018 general election.

In 1984, when Lee Kuan Yew started training his son to eventually take over the leadership of Singapore, Lee Senior was only 61 and had been Prime Minister for 25 years while General Lee was just 32 and had a sterling 13-year military career behind him.

When Mahathir started planning his son's career in 2013, he was already 88 and had retired as Prime Minister for ten years. Mukhriz, in turn, was 49 and had only five years as a mediocre deputy minister under his belt.

And that was why, much to Mahathir's chagrin, Mukhriz failed to emulate General Lee. Mahathir thought he would take the same route as Kuan Yew (and Mukhriz the same route as Hsien Loong) but it did not work out the same way because there were many missing ingredients, which was why Mahathir failed.

Lee Kuan Yew put his son through the proper training to become a leader — military included — and tasked a good mentor, Goh Chok Tong, to mould him. Mahathir, however, wanted to fast track his son, Mukhriz, without the proper training and without preparing him for the job.

Kuan Yew did not believe in short cuts. He made sure that by the time his son takes over as Prime Minister he would be well equipped for the job. Kuan Yew knew, after planting the tree, you need to give it time to take root and anchor itself firmly into the ground.

Mahathir, on the other hand, wanted his son to fast track and jump the queue. It was as if Mahathir suddenly realised he had left it too late and was trying to make up for lost time. And he thought you can just transplant a big tree and it would sit firmly in the ground and survive any storm.

Even Lim Kit Siang, who spent two years under Lee Kuan Yew, was smarter. Kit Siang knew if he wanted his son to eventually inherit the throne, Lim Guan Eng would have to go through a certain process and it cannot be done overnight.

And both Lee and Lim made sure their sons obtained the proper exposure and acquired the required experience and not be given the job when still wet behind the ears and a greenhorn to boot.

Even Najib took 27 years to become the Deputy Prime Minister and 33 years to become Prime Minister (just like the 33 years it took Hsien Loong) after going through various ministries plus a stint as the Menteri Besar of Pahang. Mahathir wants it to happen in less than ten years and with no proper training and grooming (and nothing to show for Mukhriz's term as deputy minister and Menteri Besar).

Now Mahathir realises that the door for his son to become Prime Minister through Umno or Barisan Nasional is closed. So he goes and sets up a new party as a platform to make Mukhriz the Prime Minister.

But that cannot happen if PPBM or Pribumi remains a fringe or mosquito party. Even Semangat 46, which was far popular than PPBM is, could not make Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah the Prime Minister and he eventually had to close the party down and rejoin Umno.

And PKR also cannot make Anwar Ibrahim the Prime Minister either. Both Tengku Razaleigh and Anwar know that the route to Putrajaya is through Umno and Barisan Nasional, not through an Umno clone or me-too party.

So Mahathir wants PPBM or Pribumi to take over the leadership of Pakatan Harapan from DAP. Maybe through a mosquito party like PPBM there will be no hope for Mukhriz to become Prime Minister. But as the leader of a mosquito party that is the leader of Pakatan Harapan, Mukhriz would have a better chance.

And that was why Mahathir announced in London last week that Muhyiddin Yassin is going to become the Prime Minister if and when Pakatan Harapan wins the next general election. Muhyiddin is supposed to be Mahathir's Goh Chok Tong. Muhyiddin will then groom Mukhriz to take over as Prime Minister like what Goh Chok Tong did with General Lee (but not in just two or three years though, like what Mahathir wants).

Mahathir is still hoping he can meet his 2020 timetable for Mukhriz to become Prime Minister. By then Mahathir will be 95 if he is still alive. But that would mean Pakatan Harapan must first win the 2018 general election. If not then they will have to wait until the 2023 general election and probably until 2025 for Mukhriz to become Prime Minister (if Pakatan Harapan still exists in 2023 and they win the general election that year).

By then Mahathir will be 100 years old. Do you think he will still be around and if so will he still have all his mental faculties? Considering all those factors I would not lose any hair over the matter (not that I have much hair anyway).

So, no, 2023-2025 is not viable. It has to be 2018-2020. And that can only happen if Pakatan Harapan wins the next general election and if PPBM or Pribumi is the leader of Pakatan Harapan — too many ifs for comfort. If not Pakatan Harapan will choose Anwar Ibrahim as the Prime Minister — instead of a person like Muhyiddin who is lumbered with the scandal of an affair with someone's wife.

Of course, the next route Mahathir can choose would be through Umno and Barisan Nasional, which would be more viable than through the opposition. But that means Mukhriz has to be allowed back into Umno and be given a parliament seat to contest in the next general election in 2018.

And to make sure that Mukhriz is not seen as a threat to Najib or to his deputy, Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Mukhriz can be made the Finance Minister. Remember Mahathir said the Prime Minister should not also be the Finance Minister? So Mukhriz can be that new Finance Minister as a sort of consolation prize or 'bronze medal'.

Of course, once you are the Finance Minister then you can climb one step higher to become the Deputy Prime Minister — like Anwar Ibrahim, Goh Chok Tong and General Lee Hsien Loong did (and which was why Mahathir removed Tengku Razaleigh as the Minister of Finance when he started to become a threat).

The problem is Mahathir does not have the luxury of time like Kuan Yew did. So Mahathir does not have the advantage of options to play around with. He needs to decide which route he wants to take and work towards that over the next three years. If not then Mukhriz is never going to be Prime Minister.

Everyone knows that PPBM is a vehicle for Boboi. But people do not want a Boboi Prime Minister. You never ask a Boboi to do a man's job. And Najib already told his people, for the sake of Malaysia, he cannot agree to Mukhriz becoming the Deputy Prime Minister so that he can take over as Prime Minister once Najib retires. Even Finance Minister is not in Malaysia's interest.

When in 2013 Najib did not agree to become Mukhriz's mentor or Mahathir's Goh Chok Tong, the old man started attacking the Prime Minister, using 1MDB as the catalyst. This would be like helping the scorpion to cross the river on your back. It is the nature of scorpions to sting, even those that help it. And did not Anwar say in his letter from prison to beware of the serpent?

So now, since time is not on his side, Mahathir has to work with his enemies to try to make his son the Prime Minister. Can you imagine Kuan Yew asking his enemies to make Hsien Loong Singapore's Prime Minister? I mean you just do not place the fate and future of your son in the hands of your enemies. That is utter madness. Mahathir must be insane.

And Najib is watching this drama unfold with glee. If you are able to push your enemy to bow down to and eat humble pie with another enemy, then you know you have won the battle. When two people who hate each other 'unite', while hating every minute of it, you can sleep soundly in your bed.

Well, as Shakespeare would say:

"Nature teaches beasts to know their friends." (Act II, Scene I: Coriolanus).

"Do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe?" (Act III, Scene II: Hamlet).

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts." (Act II, Scene VII: As you like it).

Better then reading Sun Tzu, do you not think so?

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