

## Pelancaran buku *Dr. Mahathir's Letters to World Leaders* **Sidang akhbar Tun Dr Mahathir**

PRESS Conference YABGH Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad at Lunch of "Dr Mahathir's Letters to World Leaders". Perdana Leadership Foundation, Wednesday, January 30, 2008

First thing before you begin to ask me questions I would like to thank you very much for your presence today. What my book is all about I have already explained just now so if there are anymore questions you are welcomed to ask, if I can answer, I will, if I cannot I will just shut up. Okay...

**Q : Will you contest in the coming General Election?**

Dr M : Well like the comedian who was talking about his girlfriend, he would like to but he didn't.

**Q : How much does the US recession is likely to affect Malaysia?**

Dr M : Well actually today the US should close down because it had been bankrupt for several years now. It has deficits. But because the United States own IMF (International Monetary Fund) the IMF has not taken any action. If we were in that situation we would have been crushed to the ground but this is the US where they can print money and where they can make use of other people's money to sustain an economy that is unsustainable.

But unfortunately too many countries have trade and investment links with the US and some of these investments abroad are really meant to supply the US with their products. If the US is not in a position to buy their products then these companies located in other countries including Malaysia will suffer. So the fact remains that the US economy is so big that its collapse is going to affect the world. So the world is not going to allow it to collapse just like the US will not allow certain big banks to collapse. We will feel the impact whether we like it or not. We will feel the impact. In fact we are already feeling the impact. Today we are in a state of denial and bad things are coming in the future because it is not going easy to ensure that the US recession does not take place. It is not easy to reverse the process.

**Q : Tun now Malaysia does not trade much with the US?**

Dr M : I don't know the last figure I had was about 30% of our exports still go to the US. So 80 per cent of our trade about...100 billion a year is a very big chunk.

**Q : Your comment on lackluster attitude from OIC in response to the problems in Palestine.**

Dr M : It is usual that they are not interested in the sufferings of the people in Gaza or Palestine. They are too busy with other things. They have never shown any sympathy for the Palestinian. Only verbal support but not really tangible support.

**Q : Tun akan turun padang berkempen untuk BN?**

Dr M : Saya dulu saya terima iaitu saya akan bantu dalam kempen tapi pada tahun 2004 oleh kerana parti BN begitu popular saya dikehendaki tidak kempen di tempat-tempat tertentu. Saya akan kempen cuma kalau saya percaya orang yang dicalonkan itu ialah orang yang boleh membawa kebaikan.

**Q : Politics is dirty because of politicians or is it that politics is just dirty?**

Salam hormat kepada para pembaca yang budiman. Saya sediakan transkrip sidang akhbar penuh YABhg Tun Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad untuk tatapan. Ini untuk mengelakkan sebarang spekulasi tentang apa yang diperkatakan oleh Dr Mahathir. Saya percaya interpretasi yang berbeza akan muncul, tapi ini perkara biasa. Tidak ada sesiapa pun yang akan berfikir semacam. Maaf kerana soalan tidak dapat disediakan secara verbatim kerana kekurangan yang terdapat pada audio. Saya harap transkrip ini sedikit sebanyak dapat membantu para pembaca di dalam memahami konteks percakapan dan kenyataan Dr Mahathir dengan lebih tepat. Semoga ianya dapat memberi manfaat kepada kita semua. Salam hormat, - Sufi

Dr M : The politicians, because I am also a politician I don't play dirty politics but when people who have openly told lies and the whole country knows they told lies and they get re-elected...and (this) cause me to lose my respect and lose my faith in the political system as practiced by them.

**Q : In your book...(not audible)**

Dr M : I have claimed to be a Muslim fundamentalist. This one (Hadhari) is modern Islam which is another thing altogether. I go for the fundamentals and the fundamentals of Islam is very good. It is not like the Christian fundamentalist where they are equated with extremism. To equate Muslim fundamentalist with extremism is wrong. It's a misnomer. If you really follow the teachings of Islam, the basic teachings of Islam, you should be a very good man, a very progressive man, a well balanced person.

**Q : (not audible)**

Dr M : I always point out that for 1,400 years there have been many interpretations of Islam and many of these interpretations are influenced by the situation occurring at that time so the interpretation today is because we are a democratic country we will have elections and anything that we say can be used by the opposition in order to gain support.

**Q : You mean current situation our interpretation is more for political reasons?**

Dr M : Yes I think it is political more than religious. If its religious we need to sit down and discuss the basis of this decision and then only we can really say that it is an Islamic injunction not to do certain things.

**Q : You say you will campaign for the candidates...does this include opposition?**

Dr M : No, I will not campaign for the opposition. But I am saying the people who support the BN should be a little bit more selective. Should think, should choose wisdom in their choice of the people they will support. If people name some deadwood, some corrupt politicians as candidates even if they are from the BN, BN supporters should not support them. That way we can clean the party, BN and UMNO because there is no hope that UMNO can be cleaned from within because everything is controlled now. Nobody can have an opinion and any contrary views they will make (is) sure will not be heard.

**Q : Tun mengatakan bahawa pengundi termasuk penyokong BN perlu melakukan perubahan di pilihanraya untuk mengubah kepimpinan BN dan UMNO. Itu maksud Tun?**

Dr M : Ya, itu sahaja harapan kita. Itu pun bukanlah kuat sangat harapan kerana saya berpendapat pengundi-pengundi biasa pun kadang-kadang terpengaruh dengan cara yang tidak halal tetapi kita sudah hilang keupayaan untuk menukar pemimpin di peringkat parti kerana parti sekarang ini dibenar cuma mengata "Yes"

kepada apa yang presiden kata. Jadi tidak ada real opinion dalam party anymore. No way you can change the leadership of the party or the way the party operates from within. If the people in Malaysia wishes to have a party that is centred on nepotism and corruption then of course they will vote for the same people and will achieve no correction.

**Q : Are you saying the PM for the moment can be considered in your definition as deadwood?**

Dr M : I don't know about what my opinion is but I know I have differences with him.

**Q : Lepas Tun lepas jawatan PM ada khabar angin tentang fail rasuah tokoh UMNO Kelantan yang Tun serah kepada Pak Lah untuk tindakan...**

Dr M : Fail kalau ada akan diserahkan oleh ACA. Bukan saya punya tugas nak serah file tapi saya tahu ada kes tertentu yang harus diselidik dan tindakan diambil. Saya amat sedar bahawa kes corruption bukan mudah untuk kita buktikan. Dengan itu kita cuma akan dengar cerita yang buruk tetapi akhirnya tiada satu tindakan pun yang boleh diambil.

**Q : When u stepped down in 2003 you said you made a gentleman's agreement for him to stay one term. In this case macam mana?**

Dr M : Even if I said I had this gentlemen's agreement there is no way I can prove it. That was my thinking, that since he was older than Najib he should be PM for a term and then Najib should be able to take over.

**Q : In the 22 years of your administration, there was fastrack development, many things were done in record time..PM now needs more time beyond five years to develop his projects. What is your view?**

Dr M : I know it takes time to implement plans and projects but I think if that is to be used as an excuse to stay in power for 18 years

That would not be very welcome. But that time to implement...at this time only announcements are being made. He is already asking for time to do this.

**Q : The PM announced economic corridor, repercussion not now...commitments made are huge. If not able to be delivered what will happen to future PM?**

Dr M : What I think is that it certainly will not be delivered by the time of the election. So this is the reason why you should allow the present Government to go on so that they can implement. But the way the things are being implemented are also questionable. Giving it to the so called GLC which then gives contracts to other people, none of which are very open that is not really the right way to do things.

**Q : What is your greatest concern in 50 years looking at Malaysia?**

Dr M : Well, I think the Government does not seem to know how to progress. How to implement things. Its already quite some-time since I stepped down. (It) would have been easier perhaps to just continue with the projects already on the ground but it was decided to postpone ostensibly because of lack of funds. But what I do know is that when I stepped down there was enough money to go ahead with all the so called mega projects. Now they have decided to go ahead with some of the mega projects but the cost is very high, as much as 50% more simply because the cost of living, the cost of everything has gone up in the meantime. So the postponement was totally unjustified. Now they realised that these are needed infrastructure.

**Q : Time to implement projects...you mean he should carry on as PM?**

Dr M : It depends upon the record you have shown in some other things that doesn't need too much time. If you show that you can implement it, the smaller projects, I think you should be given more time for the bigger projects. But what you see is just a stoppage, a kind of reversal of the previous policies and projects ostensibly because there was no funds and this is not such a good judgement.

**Q : Now you are complaining of cronyism and nepotism in Pak Lah's term.... (question not audible)**

Dr M : Well, I am aware that I was not always right but those people who were called my cronies were not my cronies. As a matter of fact when I was accused of these I published, I made public the list of people who had projects etc and it was clear that they were not people I know except for the very well known figures. I was not practicing cronyism but of course these (accusations) were attached to me as a kind of label to undermine my credibility (and) I cannot get away from it. But today we see neopotism creeping in. We see companies getting projects to the extent that many Malaysian entrepreneurs and contractors are now going abroad. They said there is no opportunity within the country.

**Q : Tun, as ahli UMNO No 1, are you aware of current happenings within the party, do you get any updates?**

Dr M : Nothing, I am completely cut out.

**Q : Compared to during your time the BN is no longer as united as before...**

Dr M : When we have a group of people working together, we must know how to handle them. They have grouses, they have differences but if you handle them properly and tackle the grouses, I think they will sit together. But if you show any weakness, giving in, people will take advantage of your weakness.

**Q : In the recent state assembly sitting in Kelantan Datuk Mustafa Mohamad admitted he asked you to stop developing Kelantan when PAS took over Government...**

Dr M : Well not only Mustafa but all the rest of UMNO felt you should not develop Kelantan because if you do they will tell people... "Look even if you don't vote for BN you will still get development, so why