

THE WIT & WISDOM OF Dr Mahathir Mohamad



BERDANA
LEADERSHIP
FOUNDATION
YAYASAN
KEPIMPINAN
BERDANA

Dr Mahathir Mohamad's opinions on
everything from Malaysians to himself
and his family

The leadership of the Malays has always tended
to be liberal. The followers are not normally so.

1970

It must be one of the fundamental tasks of true
leadership to take a powerful idea and to make its
time come.

1985

Malaysians are predictable. Dull perhaps, but
better than dealing with mercurial people.

1986

We were a domino, ready to fall to the
communists. Now we are a dynamo.

1993

Action, and not words, begets respect.

1995

It is better to own a slice of the political and
economic cake which grows healthily than to
own the whole cake that shrinks and disappears.
This simple philosophy is what saves Malaysia
and helps it to grow.

2005

Of course I don't like to be criticised. Anyone who
says he likes criticism must be a hypocrite.

2009





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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Dr Mahathir Mohamad served as prime minister of Malaysia for 22 years. He provided visionary leadership to the nation and, on the international stage, he was a commanding voice for the rights and dignity of the developing world who ably articulated Malaysia's point of view in the global arena.

A fervent nationalist, Mahathir was shaped by his strict upbringing and his experiences during the Japanese Occupation and under the British colonial administration. After the war he joined the newly formed United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) and, while studying at medical college, was often published in newspapers under the pseudonym 'Che Det'. He went on to qualify and practise as a medical doctor before becoming an MP in 1964. After the 13 May 1969 riots, Mahathir criticised the UMNO leadership and was expelled from the party as a result. During this period of political exile, he wrote his seminal *The Malay Dilemma* in which he outlined his views on the plight of the Malays. In 1972 he was invited back into UMNO and was re-elected as an MP in 1974. He then rose inexorably from minister to deputy prime minister before reaching Malaysia's highest political office in 1981.

As prime minister, Mahathir was at the forefront of the nation's economic development. He initiated key policies including the Malaysia Incorporated concept of public-private cooperation and the Look East policy to emulate the work ethic of successful Asian countries, particularly Japan and Korea. These policies fuelled his drive towards Vision 2020, his ideal of making Malaysia a developed nation by 2020.

It was under Mahathir's leadership that Malaysia secured its place in the global arena. In particular, when his strong self-belief showed through during the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997-98 as he withstood strong international pressure and introduced policies which flew in the face of orthodox economic dogma at that time. His stand was ultimately vindicated.

Dr Mahathir stepped down as prime minister in 2003, but has continued to remain in the public eye and to contribute to public debate through his widely read blog and regular public appearances and speeches. This collection of his quotations includes insights into Mahathir's strong views and perspectives on many facets of Malaysia and a wide range of broader issues. The quotations have for the most part been selected from Dr Mahathir's public speeches and statements, which have been collected at the Perdana Leadership Foundation in Putrajaya.