

HIJACK IN MALAYSIA

THE FALL OF PAKATAN HARAPAN

**SCHEMERS, TURNCOATS,
AND TRAITORS : THE
MOST TREACHEROUS
POLITICAL COUP IN
MALYSIAN HISTORY**



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FRANCIS PAUL SIAH



8/12/2020

HIJACK

IN MALAYSIA

THE FALL OF PAKATAN HARAPAN

PUSTAKA PERDANA



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written by

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Dedicated in loving memory

of my dearly beloved Mum and Dad.



Anna Chen (1920-2005)



Andrew Siah (1920-2004)

The moment one punished me, the other rushed to protect me.

(Ouch Dad, that was painful! Thanks Mum.)

*Mum and Dad, I will reserve two copies for you and bring them
with me when I join you up there. See you guys later.*

FOREWORD

by Datuk Sebastian Ting Chiew Yew



First and foremost, I would like to thank Mr. Francis Paul Siah for inviting me to write the foreword for his book entitled *HIJACK in Malaysia: The Fall of Pakatan Harapan*. I am indeed humbled and honoured by this invitation.

I am very happy for Mr. Francis and would like to congratulate him for taking this initiative to write and compile into a book his personal and well documented notes on his travel in Sarawak, closely following the 14th General Election since 2016 to Pakatan Harapan's historic victory, to its subsequent collapse within 22 months after taking power and till July 2020.

In the book, he also includes his column in *Malaysiakini* - a popular digital news portal, the *New Sarawak Tribune*, the interesting and fascinating stories he wrote for *Free Malaysia Today* - another popular digital news portal, and his *Movement for Change Sarawak (MoCS)* press statements.

A lot of things had happened in Malaysia since 2016 before the GE14, during the GE14 in 2018 and after the Harapan's historic victory on the 9th May 2018. Mr. Francis had also covered these two important incidents in his new book.

Firstly, the unexpected shock (also most likely the unforgettable and unforgivable one) experienced by Sarawak and most of the

Sarawakians due to the immediate legal suit on the 4th June 2018, less than one month after the GE14, taken by Petronas against the Government of Sarawak (and to certain extent towards the people of Sarawak) to claim exclusive ownership of oil and gas resources found in Sarawak: both on land and Sarawak Continental Shelf.

In staking its claim, Petronas relied on the controversial Petroleum Development Act 1974 (PDA 74) and the Territorial Sea Act 2012 (TSA 2012) which, to most Sarawakians, are believed to be unconstitutional, as both PDA 74 and TSA 2012 have, hitherto, never been approved by Sarawak Dewan Undangan and are therefore considered to be not applicable in Sarawak. This was the first time for the Federal Government (under PH) to act in such extreme hostility against the people of Sarawak after 57 years of being together in Malaysia. The correct approach should have been discussions, and more discussions, to find an amicable and acceptable solution to this, with the primary objective of: What belongs to Sarawak people must rightfully and morally be returned to the people of Sarawak.

Mr. Francis, being a proud Sarawakian, knows very well the inner feelings of many true Sarawakians.

Secondly, the utter shock experienced by the whole nation due to the sudden unexpected resignation of the then Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir on the 24th February 2020. Many learned people had written and speculated on the possible reasons why Tun Mahathir resigned but only Tun himself knows the real reason.

Mr. Francis and I have been long time friends despite our different political platforms. It is the mutual trust and respect we have for each other that he felt comfortable to invite me to write the Foreword for his book and it is on similar grounds that I feel comfortable to accept his gracious invitation.

Over these few years, I had been privileged to receive most, if not all, of his writings on various subjects. He writes well, the language he uses is simple but effective. And on few occasions, I commented and shared with him that he was very courageous in his writings, especially on the top politicians in Malaysia, including the Prime Ministers, the Deputy Prime Ministers, the Ministers and the Chief Ministers too. Some might have felt uncomfortable with Francis's articles and certainly I am not surprised that, over the years, he would have received legal letters.

But that is Francis to those who know him. I salute him and have the highest respect for him for his boldness, frankness, straight to the point, without mincing the words and indeed he was outspoken and would call a spade a spade. And all these writings and observations are of course without fear or favour.

In conclusion, I wish to congratulate Mr. Francis again for this successful launching of his book entitled HIJACK in Malaysia: The Fall of Pakatan Harapan and I further wish him all the very best in his new undertakings with a specific request that he will continue to write and share his thoughts on current issues as and when an issue arises.

Datuk Sebastian Ting Chiew Yew

Sarawak Legislative Assemblyman N73 Piasau Sarawak

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CHAPTER

1

PAKATAN HARAPAN: AN ALLIANCE OF STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

And then, Dr Mahathir Mohamad came along.

For the Democratic Action Party (DAP) and the People's Justice Party or Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) to work together is nothing strange. They have been allies since 1999 when PKR was formed and fought the general election for the first time that year as the Barisan Alternatif coalition.

For DAP, PKR and the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) to be in an alliance is nothing out of the ordinary too. They were together in Pakatan Rakyat and took on the might of the Barisan Nasional in the 13th General Election in 2013 as a united opposition front.

When Pakatan Rakyat broke up after GE13, DAP, PKR and the new faith-based National Trust Party (Amanah), an offshoot of PAS, were still together.

Then, along came Mahathir and his new outfit, Malaysian United Indigenous Party or Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM or popularly known as Bersatu).

“Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows.” The phrase means that interesting circumstances can bring together people who otherwise have little in common. It is found in the play “The Tempest” (Act 2, Scene 2) by William Shakespeare.

Was misery the reason Mahathir approached the opposition to work on an alliance to take on the BN in the next election?

Perhaps it was anger and misery combined. As Mahathir later related, when he questioned Najib Abdul Razak on the multi-billion dollar graft allegations tied to a state-owned investment fund he oversaw, 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), the then prime minister was evasive.

Eventually, we heard of the “Cash is king” response from Najib which became a major campaign issue against the sitting PM.

Without a doubt, Mahathir was very disappointed, angry even, with Najib. Here was a man whom he supported to be PM to succeed Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in 2009 and look what he had done. Mahathir must have found Najib’s role in the 1MDB saga unforgivable.

The nonagenarian was probably also miserable because he now realised that the man he put up to helm the nation was lacking in integrity and credibility. Mahathir, who had publicly conceded to making bad choices on several occasions, had made another one.

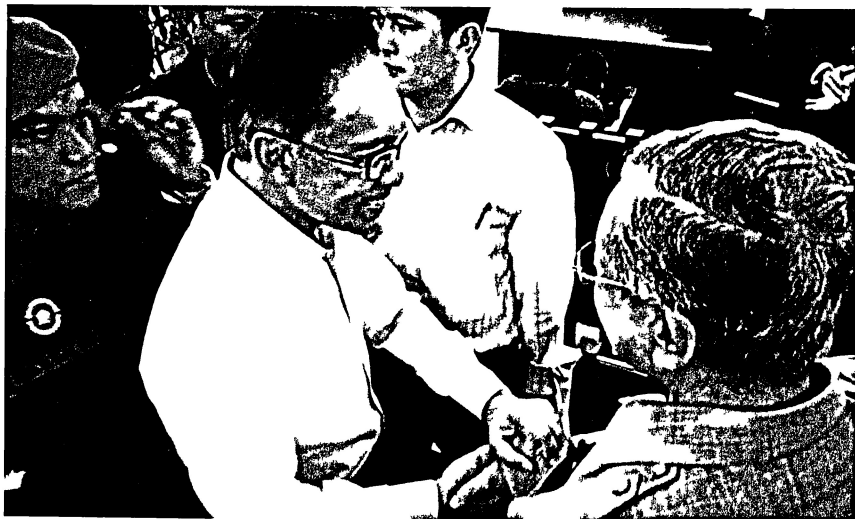
Later, Najib was stigmatised as a kleptocrat helming a kleptocracy which is a government ruled by corrupt politicians who use their political power to receive kickbacks, bribes, and special favours at the expense of the populace, or simply direct state resources to themselves, relatives or associates, according to Wikipedia.

From that time in around 2014-2015, Mahathir and Najib had burnt their bridges and had not spoken up to this day. But the grand old man then set out to do what he thought he must do – to oust Najib and his kleptocratic administration.

First Mahathir-Anwar meeting in 18 years

History will probably record that the first step towards the formation of a new opposition coalition known as Pakatan Harapan (The Alliance of Hope) was sealed on that fateful day, 5 September 2016.

It was the meeting of two strange bedfellows – Mahathir and Anwar Ibrahim – which eventually paved the way for the unusual combination or political alliance we know as Pakatan Harapan today.



Mahathir meets Anwar in a KL court, 5 Sept 2016. – Malaysiakini photo

That day was the first time the one-time mentor-protégé and long-time nemesis met in 18 years. Anwar was the jailed de facto leader of the opposition alliance then.

The next day, social media was flooded with pictures of the two men shaking hands and chatting cordially in a Kuala Lumpur high court, where Anwar had sought an injunction to halt the implementation of the National Security Council (NSC) Act.

“He showed his preparedness to come and pledged his support for the court application, and wished me well and success. And I presume, therefore, that he supports the reform agenda,” Anwar said outside the courtroom in a video on social media.

That meeting probably signalled the growing unity among opponents of scandal-tainted Prime Minister Najib.

In the two years leading up to GE14 which was held on 9 May 2018, Mahathir and Anwar met again on several occasions, either in court or in hospital where Anwar sought treatment for a back injury.

Eventually, Anwar endorsed the setting up of Pakatan Harapan, spearheaded by Mahathir, as ruling party rebels and the opposition joined hands to fight against Najib.



But the relationship between Mahathir and Anwar has always been that of real strange bedfellows.

The mistrust and resentment between the two men have never faded. This remains a sore point in PH up to this day.

Not surprising was this statement by Mahathir on 14 May 2017 as reported by Free Malaysia Today.

No need to apologise to Anwar, says Dr M

PETALING JAYA: Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad says he will not apologise to PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim, who was sent to jail 18 years ago when he was leader of the country.

Mahathir, who is now PPBM chairman said the incident was “in the past” and not related to Anwar’s current prison sentence over a case popularly referred to as “Sodomy 2”, during the present leadership of Prime Minister Najib Razak.

Speaking during an interview with SBS, an Australian broadcast agency, the 91-year old said leaders in the opposition coalition were prepared to forget the past in their bid to bring down Najib’s BN government.

“I didn’t send him to jail (this time) and don’t see any reason why I cannot be friendly again with him, especially because we have a common

goal, that is the overthrow of the present regime,” he said in the interview broadcasted today.

Asked if he had apologised to Anwar, who was deputy prime minister under Mahathir from 1993 to 1998, during their meeting on Sept 5 last year, Mahathir said no.

“No, no, no. I didn’t apologise for anything. That was something in the past. We can’t be apologising for what happens in the past,” he said.

The former Umno president described the meeting, the first since Anwar was fired from the government and as an Umno member in 1998, as “nice”.

“It was a nice meeting,” he said, admitting that Anwar was first jailed when he was in power and released after he stepped down (during the prime ministership of Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in 2004).

“Now he is in jail not because of me. It’s because of the present government. So I have no problem with that,” Mahathir said.

In 1998, Mahathir sacked Anwar from his cabinet and later from the ruling party Umno, accusing the then deputy prime minister of being a homosexual and also abusing his authority.

In January 2006, the BBC reported that Anwar was suing Mahathir for his gay slur on two occasions, first in 1998 and again in September 2005.

“Imagine having a gay prime minister. Nobody would be safe,” Mahathir had told reporters in September 2005, adding that he had sacked Anwar, his one time heir-apparent, to prevent mainly-Muslim Malaysia from having a homosexual leader, according to the report.

Meanwhile, referring to Pakatan Harapan, Mahathir said the opposition coalition consisted of people who were once against him, but all had decided to focus on the “very important issue” of overthrowing the current “kleptocratic” government.

“For that, we are prepared to forget the past,” he said.

Pakatan Harapan consists of PKR, DAP, Amanah and PPBM.

During Mahathir's leadership, Anwar was sentenced to six years in prison for corruption on April 14, 1999, and nine years for sodomy on Aug 8, 2000. The sentences were to be served consecutively.

In the second sodomy case, on Feb 10, 2015, the Federal Court sentenced Anwar to five year's jail for sodomising his former aide, Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan. Anwar is now serving his jail term in Sungai Buloh prison.

All convictions were criticised by local and international human rights groups as being politically motivated.

Mahathir met Anwar twice in recent months when he showed up during Anwar's trials at the Kuala Lumpur High Court. On Sept 5 last year they exchanged a handshake and a brief chat, and on Feb 10 they spoke for about 40 minutes. – *Free Malaysia Today*



But Mahathir was a determined man to get right into the bottom of the 1MDB scandal. This was probably one of his strengths going into GE14 and it was translated into overwhelming support for the opposition coalition.

On 15 January 2017, Mahathir stated in no uncertain terms what his goal was and it was music to the ears of many.

Dr M to chase every cent 'wrongfully spent by 1MDB'

SHAH ALAM: If the opposition wins the next general election, it will chase every sen that has been allegedly misappropriated by 1MDB, promised Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

This is part of Pakatan Harapan (PH) and Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia's (PPBM) election manifesto, which also aimed to investigate every debt incurred by 1MDB, and all the projects that may just be a waste.

"We will chase all 1MDB and government funds that have been embezzled, that we know is in the hands of certain people.

“And we will also look at the massive land sale to foreigners, to review the impact it may have on the country’s political future,” he said at the official launching of PPBM in Malawati Stadium here last night.

PPBM president Muhyiddin Yassin, who was also present, said he would look into limiting the powers of the prime minister.

He would also propose a Royal Commission to investigate the scandals surrounding 1MDB.

“To give justice to the public that has to carry 1MDB’s debt, we will ask for all 1MDB’s stolen money and assets to be returned back to Malaysia as soon as possible.

“This is something that the Barisan Nasional leaders have failed to do.”

The former deputy prime minister however insisted on the importance of having the public’s support first. He said the opposition has to convince the public of its ability to be a good alternative government.

“The people are ready to change the government. But they want to see all opposition parties united, not divided.

“Let there be no three-cornered fight in the elections or the public will not support us.

“They will not be confident of our ability to win the elections if we are divided.”

Muhyiddin also re-floated the idea of a Barisan Rakyat, a coalition comprising all opposition parties that are interested in taking down BN.
– *Free Malaysia Today*



In my homeland, Sarawak, many of my fellow Sarawakians believed that Mahathir was the best man to lead the opposition alliance against BN.

On 24 January 2017, more than a year before GE14, this was arguably the general sentiments among Sarawakians.

PH supporters in Sarawak think Dr M is the best bet

Many supporters of Pakatan Harapan in Sarawak are of the opinion that the opposition coalition made the correct move in naming Dr Mahathir Mohamad as its prime ministerial candidate.

The general feeling on the ground in the Hornbill State is that there appears to be an upsurge of support for Harapan since its convention early this month endorsing Mahathir as PM and Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail as his deputy.

Does this mean that they love Mahathir more? Not exactly perhaps.

Rather, it seems to be the understanding and realisation that Mahathir, with his wide experience, political acumen and the respect he commands, is the best person under the present circumstances to fend off the kleptomaniac BN-Umno regime.

Although there are murmurs of discontent among the Reformasi group within PKR and DAP initially, such disgruntlement is water under the bridge now.

Harapan is hoping that Mahathir and his Bersatu party would be able to pull around five to 10% of Umno's Malay votes over to Harapan and ensure a slim majority for victory.

Pakatan Rakyat in GE13 and before that were unable to do so, even with Anwar Ibrahim and PAS campaigning as a team for the opposition.

Mahathir is the trump card Harapan needs among the Malay voters. This is one reason why Umno is running scared.

Political observers are also saying that with the expected BN victory in Sarawak, Harapan must handle Sabah with extreme care as Sabah, not Sarawak, could ultimately emerge kingmaker after GE14.

The Umno-BN think-tank is aware of this groundswell and is pulling all stops to stifle this 'Malay tsunami' - via realignment of constituencies with the Election Commission and other dubious means, including threats, "money and gutter politics".

Observers are also pointing to the possibility of Prime Minister Najib Razak stepping down with 'conditions' - two camps in Umno are emerging and fear of retribution and prosecution are for real.

Many in Umno are aware that Najib is a liability, and will do no good to their battle for survival. Umno people are known to save their own skin.

But Harapan supporters are hoping this will not happen. They need the unpopular Najib to lead BN into GE14. The utter dislike for Najib and his cronies is one of the strongest unifying and rallying factors among its allies and it cannot afford any more potholes on its road to Putrajaya.

A deal could be struck or not at all, depending on the situation on the ground. Some view it as a better option than a declaration of emergency, which others fear may happen, if Umno loses its grip on power. Not unless Harapan sweeps to power by an overwhelming majority.

The well-balanced seat distribution among Harapan parties appears to be a healthy 'check and balance' - only by the final outcome will it be known which of the parties wields more influence.

As it is, no one party in Harapan is capable of forming the government on its own, unlike the dominant Umno in Malaya or its proxy, PBB in Sarawak.

Perhaps Sarawakians know only too well the dominance of PBB in Sarawak politics and the rampant abuse of power by its former president and long-time chief minister Abdul Taib Mahmud.

It is apparent they now prefer a coalition like Pakatan Harapan where no one party is able to dominate Malaysian politics.



DAP leaders were believed to be the first group to welcome Mahathir into the opposition alliance. On 24 July 2017, DAP veteran Lim Kit Siang made this concession which was seen as crucial in garnering support for PH from the Bumiputras.

Kit Siang: I am okay with Dr M's Malays-only stand

PETALING JAYA: Lim Kit Siang says he may not agree with all of what Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said about PPBM not allowing DAP candidates to contest under the PPBM ticket in the next general election, but understood his stand.

Lim was referring to comments made by the PPBM chairman when asked if the party would allow DAP candidates to contest under the PPBM ticket, should the Registrar of Societies deregister the party.

On Saturday, Mahathir said PPBM has to remain a Malay party in order to gain the support of Malay voters who are “still very communal”.

“If they (Malay voters) see a multi-racial party, they will not support it. They (Pakatan Rakyat) got a lot of support from the Chinese, but little Malay support and without it, you can't win.

“So we can replace Umno with our group (PPBM), not by being like Umno, but we would be a Malay party,” the Pakatan Harapan chairman said.

Lim contended that PPBM was still more Malaysian than Umno, as the former wants Malays to unite and work with other citizens, while the latter wants Malaysians to remain Malays, Chinese and Indians and is even trying to polarize the next elections as a battle between the Malays and Chinese.

“The Pakatan Harapan parties of DAP, PKR, Amanah and PPBM do not want GE14 to be a battle between the Malays and Chinese, but for all Malaysians, regardless of race, religion or region, to take one big stride forward – to unite as Malaysians and save it from the trajectory of a failed and a rogue state,” the Gelang Patah MP said.

Lim, who is also DAP's parliamentary leader, also called out Barisan Nasional components MCA, Gerakan, MIC for allowing Umno to carry



*“When you are a politician,
don’t even trust yourself.”*

Francis Paul Siah is a veteran Sarawak editor. He has been a journalist for more than four decades and had served in Sarawak, Sabah and Kuala Lumpur. He still writes his regular column and contributes to several publications.

He currently heads the Movement for Change, Sarawak (MoCS), a non-governmental organisation noted for its fierce anti-corruption stance in The Land of the Hornbill.

The author can be reached at sirsiah@gmail.com

Quotes To Ponder

"I think even the unbelievers will believe that there is a Heavenly One who knows how to take care of wicked politicians who betray the trust and mandate of the people."

"Don't be prisoners of a virus. When your time is up, it's up. No virus, visible or invisible, will make any difference."

"Politicians say they will give you a brighter future. On the contrary, they will dim it."

"Once in power, expect your most humble politician to go off track. They might even forget their mother's name too."

"Don't play play with voters. Voters are the masters, not politicians. Voters, banish those traitors to Timbaktu and bury them there."

"It will probably take several new generations of Sabahans to forgive and forget the sins of some Umno leaders."

"Traitors are worse than animals. Even animals would be kinder and more grateful to their master. Think of your pet dog."

"The reality of justice here is 'Different strokes for different folks'. So what is real justice, you tell me!"

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