

Truth Be Told – The Country Must Rally Behind Prime Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin. Why?

By Matthias Chang – Future Fast-Forward

**Malaysians Must Rally Behind TSMY To Succeed
If Not, Total Failure Till 2035
If You Have A Better Scenario, Tell Me**

Introduction

Recently, I exchanged a few Whatsapp messages with the son of a late UMNO leader, following my invitation to him to research on the global market for LNG, why Shell is bleeding and the future of Petronas moving forward.

And as usual, I provided sufficient contemplative points on the future of our country and the need to unite behind the current prime minister on the lowest common denominator, to secure the future of our country. Whether he will follow through, is left to be seen.

That said, it is impossible to narrate a two volume historical account of UMNO's succession politics in this article. I will provide the bare bones of the history and fast forward to the present challenges and the premise for this belated article. I seek your indulgence for cutting corners in the narrative. Historians will complain on the brevity and intellectual masturbators will argue that there is not enough "meat and juices" to speculate and debate on the nuances. I did say that this is not a historical treatise. Let's begin.

Backgrounder

The first set of three prime ministers:

Tunku Abdul Rahman - 13 years 22 days
Tun Abdul Razak Hussein - 5 years 114 days
Tun Hussein Onn - 5 years 183 days

The second set of three prime ministers:

Tun Mahathir Mohamad (Tun M) - 22 years 107 days
Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (Pak Lah) - 5 years 154 days
Dato Seri Najib Razak (Najib) - 9 years 37 days

The 7th Prime Minister (Tun M) from the PH coalition was an aberration as a result of the abject failure of the PH coalition - 22 months of ugly and wasteful power struggle. Additionally, the choice of Tun M's premiership was an

opportunistic and temporary outcome, merely to oust the sixth Prime Minister (Najib) who forfeited his tenure by his reckless greed.

Tun M was given a chance by destiny (or by Allah, if you prefer) to set the stage for the third set of prime ministers but it was not to be for reasons we already know too well. **It is fair to say that this failure was expected, because Anwar Ibrahim was never in the succession equation, but Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin was always the preferred choice of Destiny.**

Why?

Upsetting The Applecart

Query: Of the two warlords of UMNO in Penang, why did Tun M chose Anwar over Abdullah Badawi?

Seeds of rancour planted.

Query: Why did Tun M chose Badawi over Najib as deputy Prime Minister (DPM)?

Seeds of rancour planted.

Query: When Badawi was PM in October, 2003, why did Tun M pushed for Najib as DPM over Muhyiddin Yassin (TSMY), the preferred choice? Tun even made the announcement of Najib as DPM before Pak Lah made his official choice.

Was it a political coup?

Seeds of rancour planted.

On **31st October, 2003**, Pak Lah assumed the post of Prime Minister on the retirement of Tun M. **Pak Lah was therefore an Acting President of UMNO**. It was only in **January, 2004** that Pak Lah appointed Najib as deputy Prime Minister. Why the delay?

And as at January 2004, **Najib was also an Acting Deputy President of UMNO**. It was only in the **September, 2004 UMNO elections**, that the posts of President and deputy President were formalised and the respective posts **were uncontested. TSMY was then the third ranking Vice-President.**

On **26th March, 2009**, in the UMNO elections and just before Pak Lah handed power to Najib, the pecking order for succession was as follows:

President

Candidate	Delegates' votes	Division nominated
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<u>Mohammad Najib Abdul Razak</u>	won uncontested	182
<u>Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah</u>	did not qualify	1

Deputy President

Candidate	Delegates' votes	Division nominated
<u>Muhyiddin Yassin</u>	1,575 votes	91
<u>Muhammad Muhammad Taib</u>	916 votes	46
<u>Mohd Ali Mohd Rustam</u>	disqualified	47
<u>Shahrir Abdul Samad</u>	did not qualify	1
<u>Nur Jazlan Mohamed</u>	withdrawn	

It is to be noted that the Deputy President post was contested with TSMY winning by a huge margin in terms of number of nominations and votes.

Vice Presidents

Candidate	Delegates' votes (max. 3)	Division nominated
<u>Ahmad Zahid Hamidi</u>	1,592 votes	105
<u>Hishammuddin Hussein</u>	1,515 votes	152
<u>Mohd Shafie Apdal</u>	1,445 votes	79
<u>Mohamed Khaled Nordin</u>	1,397 votes	72
<u>Rais Yatim</u>	491 votes	26
<u>Mohd Isa Abdul Samad</u>	432 votes	26
<u>Syed Hamid Albar</u>	410 votes	32
<u>Abdul Rahim Thamby Chik</u>	192 votes	13
<u>Jamaluddin Mohd. Jarjis</u>	withdrawn	25
<u>Shahidan Kassim</u>	did not qualify	6
<u>Mohamad Hasan</u>	did not qualify	3
<u>Musa Aman</u>	did not qualify	2
<u>Annuar Musa</u>	did not qualify	2
<u>Mohd Ali Mohd Rustam</u>	did not qualify	1
<u>Halimah Mohamed Sadique</u>	did not qualify	1
<u>Affifudin Omar</u>	did not qualify	1

On 10th April, 2009, Najib became the Prime Minister and Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin (TSMY) became the deputy Prime Minister until he was terminated on 29th July 2015 following differences over the 1MDB scandal.

TSMY was a major threat to Najib and the writing was on the wall that Najib's days were numbered and sooner or later, Najib would have to step down as

Prime Minister. TSMY was sacked by Najib as a member of UMNO to remove that threat.

From the above historical perspective, TSMY was a legitimate contender to be the 8th Prime Minister and deservedly so. When the PH fiasco triggered by the resignation of Tun M in February of 2020, and Anwar Ibrahim (Anwar) failed to command the majority of the MPs, TSMY had every right to put his name forward to the Agong for consideration as the next Prime Minister. With humility TSMY even sought the agreement of Tun M for doing so. And Tun M agreed.

And instead of supporting TSMY as the 8th Prime Minister, Tun M bare his fangs and accused TSMY of treachery and betrayal, when TSMY was at the material time the President of Bersatu who endured so much to ensure Pakatan Harapan (PH) victory in 2018 and thereafter. It counts for nothing as far as Tun M is concerned. Loyalty, for Tun is a one-way traffic, to him alone and without a thought for quid pro quo!

Fast Forward

Destiny and history has done right for TSMY. It was also timely.

A critical question which has escaped the thoughts of many politicians is, “Will there be a credible successor to TSMY in the third set of Prime Ministers?”

By 2030, TSMY would have just under ten years to lay the foundation for a successor.

After the horrible mismanagement of Pak Lah and the Kleptocracy of Najib, a span of 14 years of regression, it would take a gigantic effort by TSMY to bring the ship to even keel. Hence, the strategic importance of the 12th Malaysia Plan ending in 2025 and TSMY must get all things right by that timeline and God willing we would see the fruits of our labours by 2030.

It is during this period of challenges that successors would be groomed for higher responsibilities. And if truth be told, this is the greatest failure of Tun M in his 22 years as a leader and his second chance in 2018 to make good his errors which ended in disaster in 2020 - 22 months of rabid and sinister power struggle. And Tun M wants a third chance. God forbid!

At this moment in time, and once again if truth be told, there is no one on the horizon who has the experience, credibility and goodwill to be a successor to TSMY. You may want to argue that it is too early to contemplate the future when TSMY is only six months in office. To such numbskulls, I would just say, why have five year plans? And if you cannot see beyond 2020, I thank God for his little mercies that you are irrelevant.

I trust that I have made a case for all Malaysians to overcome their prejudices, bias and misperceptions to rally behind our Prime Minister to secure a peaceful, united and harmonious Malaysia.