

Tun Razak's Malay Political Legacy and The "Last Political Mohican" – An Unprecedented Short Historical Analysis

By Matthias Chang – Future Fast-Forward

Back-Grounder

I am seventy-three years "old" getting on to seventy-four and was fortunate to have a ringside seat to many political developments that have evolved over the decades since Malaysia's Independence in 1957. But nothing can be compared to and or replaced the experience that I has accumulated and more importantly *learned* as the Political Secretary to the Fourth Prime Minister of Malaysia, YA Bhg. Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad and from other political actors across the political divide.

No one and no one should compete and or replace the legacies of YABhg. Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. It is a folly and an exercise in futility to even contemplate such an endeavour. The issue is not that I am a fan or a crony of our fourth Prime Minister.

No one is perfect, but in politics, the tendency is to hurl stones at your enemies (often missing) and disregard with contempt the successes and accomplishments of the "enemy", a trait that ensures the downfall of any aspiring politician to be a leader.

By all means be angry with the "defeats" suffered, the mistakes made, but never be jealous of the successes of the "enemy", for the such lessons learned are invaluable for survival.

YABhg. Tun's Mahathir Mohamad's accomplishments are on record for all to examine with a fine tooth-comb. Learn from those successes and **avoid the mistakes** that Tun made. There are no textbooks on how to develop a country or to implement national policies as such issues are **"work in progress"**, take years to implement and only history, decades later, can come to **some conclusion**, as **historians have bias and prejudices**, often than not, the victors dictate the story to be told.

Before proceeding further, I seek the indulgence of readers to digress and invite them to contemplate and dissect what Henry Kissinger said, and I quote:

"To be an enemy of the US is dangerous, but to be a friend is fatal."

I can assure the readers that only a handful of Malaysian politicians are aware of the quote or even understand the context of the quote. Obsessed with gaining power in a political party or government, infantile politicians fail to

comprehend the truism of Kissinger's observations about the nature and power of the United States / politics. Hence, it is not surprising that only a few succeed to the top of the global political ladder.

What Henry Kissinger actually said in November 1968 was:

“Nixon should be told that it is probably an objective of Clifford to depose Thieu (South Vietnamese president Nguyen Van Thieu) before Nixon is inaugurated. Word should be gotten to Nixon that if Thieu meets the same fate as Diem, the word will go out to the nations of the world that it may be dangerous to be America's enemy, but to be America's friend is fatal.”

Context, context, context and learn, learn and learn!

Without the context - misunderstandings and misinterpretations create the environment of the “blind leading the blind” and the wrong lessons learned.

The quotation informs us inter-alia how the US formulates and conducts her foreign policies. Need I say more?

A Critical Recollection

Soon after I took the oath of office as the Political Secretary to the 4th Prime Minister, YA Bhg. Tun Mahathir Mohamad, I had an opportunity to convey to the Prime Minister on how ***I would discharge my onerous duties to protect and defend the OFFICE of the Prime Minister.*** To the best of my recollections, I said and I paraphrase as follows:

“When I was a lawyer, I had many clients. I gave my very best, the pros and the cons to ensure that my clients understood the duties that I was discharging. My clients can reject or accept my advice and to seek a second opinion, if they so desired. That is the clients' prerogative, but they damn well pay my fees for the work done. Period!

Now, I have one client – the OFFICE of the Prime Minister. My utmost efforts are to protect and defend that OFFICE, come hell or high-water. When my efforts succeeds, all the kudos go to the person occupying the OFFICE. I cannot afford to falter and I will not falter, God forbids!

Should I fail (and I said that I will never failed) and the OFFICE is jeopardised and brought into disrepute, I will take all responsibilities for the failures by way of a press statement and resign. There will be no need to request for my resignation. No need for any discussions or negotiations, as I had shamed the OFFICE of the Prime Minister.” QED

The witness trembled, assuming that what I had stated applied to him as well. I assured him that what was stated was ONLY applicable to me! He heaved a sigh of relief!

It is my earnest hope that what follows in my analysis would be considered in like manner, by one and all. **So, walk the talk with me** and **not talk and talk the talk, in coffee shops and fine restaurants indulging in B.S. and intellectual masturbations.**

Cutting to the Chase – The Meat of My Analysis

The undeniable historical fact is *that EVERY Prime Minister that succeeded YA Bhg. Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad (Tun) has failed* from Tun's standpoint and the standards set by Tun. **All were chosen as deputy Prime Ministers** save and except Tan Sri Muiyuddin Yassin (but he was appointed to lead Party Bersatu, and if circumstances allowed, he would be the Prime Minister to succeed Tun's premiership) as happened in March, 2020 to August 2021. A very short stint!

Tun's First deputy – Musa Hitam, who failed to succeed Tun.

Tun's Second deputy – Ghafar Baba, who failed to succeed Tun.

Tun's Third deputy – Anwar Ibrahim, who failed to succeed Tun (but became PM by another route).

Tun's Fourth deputy – Abdullah Badawi (Pak Lah), who succeeded Tun (but resigned in humiliation after losing the 2/3 majority in parliament and five State governments.

Tun's Fifth deputy – Najib Razak who was appointed deputy PM by Badawi on the demand by Tun and became PM on the resignation of Badawi. Tun was responsible for the this succession line-up.

*** I have deliberately left out Tan Sri Muiyuddin Yassin and Dato Sri Ismail Sabri as Prime Ministers, as their tenure as PM was too short to be of any significance. With regard to the current Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim he has inherited a divided and fractured country, a history to be written in due course.

YBM Tan Sri Tengku Razaleigh (the last “political Mohican” of the political dynastic line-up of Tun Razak, the second Prime Minister of Malaysia) and considered by many political pundits as the **“enemy of Tun”**, vied for the deputy President of UMNO (and if he had succeeded would have been the deputy Prime Minister to Tun). We can speculate whether it was a blessing in disguise or a cruel fate. History will be the judge.

History, thus far has not been kind to Ku Li, even when he has been the longest serving MP (1974 -2022, 48 years).

But history does not make history. It is man who makes History, the stories of those who has overcome all their trials and tribulations. That history of Ku Li has yet to be written!

Many politicians consider the attainment of premiership as the pinnacle of political achievements. Such folly! And in Malaysia, we have enough foolhardy prime ministers' mistakes and tragedies to learn from.

Politicians who aspire to be at the top, the first critical lesson must be the avoidance of being "Friends" to POWER, neither as "Enemies" as well for the former is fatal and the latter is dangerous.

Maybe we should also contemplate another quotation from Henry Kissinger:

"America has no permanent friends or enemies, only interests".

If that be the case, then I would suggest that to survive in politics **without having to "sell" your soul to the devil, you need to adhere to the axiom:**

"Help me, to help YOU!"

Why?

Because even an enemy whose back is push to the wall, may help you in return for a help – a quid pro quo!

In my years of experience, one cardinal Rule that I keep close to my heart is to learn:

To stridently walk away, if the choice is to sell your soul, even if death is the consequence, as no price is worth surrendering your soul.

A Fractured Malaysia

Our country is fractured because our political leaders failed to appreciate and understand the above axioms and we, as citizens are so docile to accept propaganda and lies as Truths. Our spiritual leaders have surrendered to Evil because to fight Evil requires strength, discipline and Faith, as it is more convenient to comply and obey.

The **“Last Mohican”** has a choice to make and we, the people must decide whether to break the cycle of failures, turn a new page and demand from the “Last Mohican” (his last chance) to step up to the plate and start a New Cycle of Success!

We can also walk away and let the Law of Karma takes its course! Have Faith in HIM (God Almighty) and you need not be terrified of the unknown.