

**Book Review ‘Tunku Abdul Aziz: Someone Had To Say It...’**

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Tunku Abdul Aziz is best known for his robust advocacy against corruption not only in Malaysia, but also globally. He was for some years a vice-chairman of the Board of Transparency International. In Malaysia he led a group of like-minded individuals to set up Transparency International Malaysia at a most difficult time-when Dr. Mahathir, well known for his ambivalence towards corruption in public life, was Prime Minister. Tunku Aziz believes that where ethical standards are in place, corrupt behaviour can be checked. As a measure of his standing in the international anti-corruption community, he was appointed in 2006 as Special Adviser to the UN Secretary General, and in that capacity established the United Nations Ethics office in New York, putting in train the whistle blower protection programme and the declaration of interests (assets) programme involving some two thousand top officials around the world as a first step.

He keeps to a hectic schedule writing a weekly column for Sin Chew News and an occasional piece for the Malaysian Insider. He travels overseas a great deal speaking on corruption and good governance issues. The current volume of 38 essays cover a wide range of concerns, all addressed by the author’s inimitable turn of language and sharp commentary towards putting things right in Malaysia. The essays continue to tackle issues in the author special style, perhaps usually subtle enough to escape the total anger or rancour of his targets. His views however continue to need further fortification and amplification as many matters have yet to be put right. He has already received positive response from readers, but much of his constructive critiques remain to be understood or accepted.

It was both sorrow and anger at the sorry state of affairs obtaining in Malaysia, beginning with the Mahathir years that drove the author to such distraction that he began to write a series of articles for publication in the New Sunday Times. Some of those articles he later presented to the readers of his book, Straight Talk. He now offer another volume based on a mixed selection of the balance of his New Sunday Times articles and those written specifically for the Sin Chew

Daily, a highly regarded Malaysian Chinese newspaper with which he is privileged to be associated. The Sin Chew articles were also carried, courtesy of the Sin Chew Press, by Malaysian Insider, an influential and respected independent news portal. If this book succeeds even a little in raising public awareness of the colossal damage inflicted on Malaysia by Mahathir Mohamad, the author feel that all the efforts that have gone into the writing of these weekly articles would have been worth their while.

The author's view that we have seen how one man's insatiable lust for power, acting more often than not from the basest of motives to enrich himself and his family, has wreaked havoc on Malaysian landscape in political, social, economic and ethical terms. Mahathir was able to govern Malaysia in ways bordering on the criminal with complete impunity, accountable to no one. He succeeded because as soon as he came to power, he set about, with a vengeance, the task of decimating every single pillar of the constitution and in the process, compromising of all the most important institutions. In short order, the pillars intended to support and protect the democratic values of the nation and the rights of its citizens were toppled unceremoniously, with the result that every vestige of the rule of law and the doctrine of the separations of powers that had been prominent features of Malaysian constitution had been rendered inoperably impotent, leaving the way clear for him to impose his will on the nation.

Some of the articles focus on another serious concern-national unity and integration. The key to national unity is integration firmly grounded in policies outlawing discrimination of any kind. There is no moral, political, social or economic justification for it in today's Malaysia. The disadvantaged of all races must be helped in ways that it will give them back their dignity through employment. Such policies as exist that divide rather than unite Malaysian must be treated as a social cancer and must be excised if the nation is to regain its health and take its rightful place at the top table among the truly admired and respected nations of the world. This is the author wish for his country. The entire proceeds from the sale of this book will go, as in the case of Straight Talk, towards supporting the work of Research for Social Advancement.

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