

EXCERPT: A CONVERSATION WITH TAN SRI LEO MOGGIE

PERDANA LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION ORAL
HISTORY SERIES



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PROFILE

TAN SRI LEO MOGGIE



Tan Sri Leo Moggie was born on 1st October 1941 in Kanowit, Sarawak, Malaysia.

He began his career as a civil servant in the Sarawak State Civil Service from 1966 to 1974. His career in politics began soon after when Tan Sri Leo contested and won the Machan State Constituency seat and the Kanowit Parliamentary seat in 1978. During his term as a member of Sarawak's State Assembly from 1974 to 1978, Tan Sri Leo served as Minister of Welfare Services (1976– 1977) and Minister of Local Government (1977–1978).

Tan Sri joined the Federal Cabinet from 1978 to 2004 as Minister of Energy, Telecommunications and Posts (1978–1989), Minister of Works (1989-1995), again as Minister of Energy, Telecommunications and Posts (1995-1998) and as Minister of Energy, Communications and Multimedia (1998 to 2004). He retired from active politics in 2004.

Tan Sri Leo Moggie has served as Chairman of Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) and a number of companies under the TNB Group since April 12, 2004. In his capacity as Chairman of TNB, Tan Sri Leo also serves as Chairman, Board of Directors of Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN); Trustee, Yayasan Tenaga Nasional, and Trustee, Yayasan Canselor, Universiti Tenaga Nasional. He is also Pro-Chancellor of UNITEN.

He received his early education at Sarawak's St Francis Xavier in Kanowit (1950– 1952), Batu Lintang Teachers College and School (1953 – 1957) in Kuching, Tanjong Lobang School (now Tun Haji Bujang College) in Miri (1958 – 1960) and St. Joseph's School in Kuching (1960 – 1961). He continued his higher education as a Colombo Plan student at Otago University, New Zealand where he received his Bachelor of Arts in History (1964) and Masters of Arts in History (1965).

He received his Masters of Business Administration from Pennsylvania State University, USA in 1973. Tan Sri Leo was conferred an Honorary Doctorate of Laws from Otago University, New Zealand in 2000 and an Honorary Doctorate of Science from Multimedia University, Malaysia in 2003.

Tan Sri Leo Moggie was conferred the Panglima Negara Bintang Sarawak (P.N.B.S) in 1980, which carries the title Dato', the Darjah Utama Yang Amat Mulia Bintang Kenyalang Sarawak (D.A.) in 1999, which carries the title Datuk Amar, the Panglima Setia Mahkota (P.S.M.) in 2005, which carries the title Tan Sri and the Sri Sultan Ahmad Shah Pahang (S.S.A.P.) in 2007, which carries the title Dato' Seri.

LEADERSHIP

DMS | *COULD YOU TELL US AN EXPERIENCE THAT YOU HAD working with Temenggong Jugah?*

TSLM | I was accompanying him one time on a visit to a particular longhouse. You will remember that before he became a minister, he was a Penghulu first, and then a Temenggong, so he had been a community leader. He was well respected, and had earned the trust of the people.

When we visited this particular longhouse, the people still looked to him as a Penghulu. They brought their small dispute to him to mediate. Jugah was quite a charismatic person. When the two sides of the dispute got very vocal, he said, “Why don’t you people keep on talking? I will go inside and sleep. When you are ready, call me.” That stopped them arguing!

He knew their psychology, and understood how to keep them in line. He was also very practical. Since that incident, whenever I faced a problem I would ask myself how the old

man would have handled it. So, yes, he influenced me in that manner.

DMS | *He taught you the importance of earning people's respect.*

TSLM | Respect and trust. Sometimes, you have to deal with very ordinary, simple matters, not high policy stuff. But even in cases like that, when it touches people directly, in order to solve it, you first need to earn people's respect and trust.

DMS | *I note that you are among the few people who had the opportunity to work under the leadership of four Prime Ministers: Tun Hussein Onn, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and indirectly, of course, with Dato' Seri Najib Tun Razak. In your opinion how do they approach particular issues in nation building? Are there any differences and similarities in their leadership styles that stand out for you? Are there specific lessons, especially leadership lessons, which you draw from each of them?*

TSLM | You are right in that each person has a different style of doing things. All of them have one common interest and that is to see this country move forward. I don't think anybody can question that motivation in every single one of our Prime Ministers.

I'm fortunate in that I had the chance to work directly under Tun Hussein as well as Tun Dr Mahathir. I only worked briefly with Tun Abdullah, from October 2003 until April 2004 but we had been colleagues in the Cabinet for a number of years when he was Foreign Minister.

I owe a lot to Tun Hussein as he appointed me to the Cabinet. Tun Hussein was a very deliberate person. He was very

careful and very meticulous, especially with regard to issues of a sensitive nature, such as communal, ethnic, or racial issues. In Cabinet, for such matters, he would ask individual ministers to express their views before he made a decision.

From that perspective, he was more like a chairman. His reputation of high integrity is definitely well-deserved – I always looked up to him because of his integrity.

(Tan Sri elaborates further in the book)

SABAH & SARAWAK

DMS | *BASED ON THE AGREEMENT SET DURING THE FORMATION of Malaysia, do you think we should continue with the terms or do you see a need for modifications?*

TSLM | I think it is important that we use that agreement as a base. Don't forget that the agreement came about as a result of a series of negotiations and discussions through numerous meetings of inter-governmental committees. When they drafted the Constitution, they must have recognised all the concerns brought up during those meetings. So, the agreement is a good base and you have to be aware of the original terms.

As you go along, there may be changes, but they should occur naturally rather than be imposed. Once they are imposed, you will get a lot of negative reaction. (Take) the issue of immigration, for instance. People in the Peninsular find it very difficult to understand why you need to bring your Identity Card (IC), MyKad or passport to go to Sabah or Sarawak, especially when Sabahans and Sarawakians

don't need those documents to enter Peninsular Malaysia. People keep asking, "Why?"

But this was debated before the formation of Malaysia. One of the understandings was that this requirement must remain. Otherwise, because the Sarawak people were less educated than Peninsular Malaysians, there was the risk of people coming from the Peninsular who would dominate every sector of the economy.

DMS |*So, that was the concern?*

TSLM |Yes, the requirement was a protection. You do not want to remove this protection abruptly. If, over time, it becomes natural for this requirement to be dropped, then so be it. People would be more accepting. But, if you start questioning that condition now, you are just inviting negative reactions.

DMS |*There seem to be grumblings of dissatisfaction from Sabah and Sarawak with regard to their status within Malaysia. Tan Sri had alluded to this earlier. Some people are calling for Sabah and Sarawak to secede from Malaysia. What are your views on this? Are there particular issues that you believe underpin this unhappiness, to which the federal government should pay more attention?*

TSLM |Earlier on, I emphasised that when Malaysia was formed, there were expectations in Sabah and Sarawak of how they would be treated within the federation. In Sarawak, people talk about the 18 points though I myself have not seen the actual text of the 18 points. Sabah's 20 points are in document form. These points or conditions centred on the need to maintain autonomy on certain

matters such as immigration. If people worry that there is encroachment against our autonomy, there will be a reaction. That's why it's important to remain firm to the constitutional framework.

(Tan Sri's response continues in the book)

ABOUT PERDANA LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION

Perdana Leadership Foundation was chartered in January 2003 as a non-profit organisation, founded with gifts from people who supported the vision of a thriving research and learning institution dedicated to the study of Malaysian leadership and nation-building. It is unique in the sense that it began as an entirely private sector initiative, seed-funded and organised by private sector individuals and corporations. Most of the Foundation's present trustees were the early benefactors of this Foundation.

The Foundation's physical home in Precinct 8, Putrajaya, was completed in October 2003. The stately building now houses the Perdana Library, an auditorium as well as a multi-purpose hall in addition to the offices of the Foundation's Honorary President, YABhg Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, and his wife, YABhg Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

A tax-exempt, non-profit organisation, the Foundation intends to become the premier institution for the study of Malaysia's Prime Ministers and the central resource centre

for research into national stewardship as well as a platform for reflection, debate, and discussion with distinguished figures in Malaysian leadership.

On May 10, 2005, the Foundation was officially launched by the fifth Prime Minister, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who expressed the government's full support for the Foundation's objectives and programmes.

Perdana Leadership Foundation aims to:

- Highlight the contribution of Malaysia's past Prime Ministers in the social, economic and political development of the nation
- Create awareness of the development process of the nation and draw lessons from the nation's history to enhance future development
- Become the premier resource centre for the policies, strategies and initiatives adopted under Malaysia's various Prime Ministers which may be used and adapted by other developing nations

The Foundation also has a broader objective i.e. to promote global understanding by providing a channel for scholars and thinkers to undertake research and idea-sharing for lasting, peaceful resolutions.