

Shifting focus from 1MDB culprits to whistleblowers

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COMMENT Malaysian politics is always colourful, exciting and dramatic. The political arena provides ample opportunity for twisting and turning things around. A simple probe into financial scandals of the government has the potential to be turned into something more conspiratorial and dangerous.

Is there really a plot to topple the elected government of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak? In other words, all the 'charade' about Najib's involvement in Malaysia's 1MDB scandal is nothing but an attempt by certain persons, including members of the opposition, to discredit and contribute to the downfall of Najib?

But very basic questions posed by former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad about the whereabouts of the RM42 billion funds from 1MDB has not been explained or answered.

Moreover, the alleged flow of funds estimated to be around RM2.6 billion into the private accounts of Najib has not been directly denied.

Najib is merely saying that he has not used any funds from 1MDB for his personal gain; is it then all right if he were to use the funds for financing the last general election? Where is the Election Commission (EC) on this matter?

To date, despite the ongoing controversy and allegation that funds were used for election campaign, the EC - supposedly the watchdog for the prevention of election fraud and misuse of funds - is rather silent on the matter.

Yes, a task force comprising the heads of the four agencies has been created to investigate the allegations against Najib. The question topmost in the minds of Malaysians is whether the individuals who are heading these outfits have the independence and integrity to discharge the duties entrusted upon them.

Twist to 1MDB saga

Well, even before the task force could begin its job, another controversy related to the 1MDB issue has suddenly reared its ugly head. This time, some individuals and agencies associated with Umno have provided a twist to the whole 1MDB issue by saying that there is a plot to overthrow the lawfully elected government of Najib.

The media, especially the mainstream ones, have gone to town with it. There is a worry that Najib - unable to confront his critics over the 1MDB affair and to deflect the whole issue - has come up with a theory saying that the 1MDB affair is all about anti-Najib forces trying to discredit and topple the government of Najib.

However incredible and preposterous this theory is, the fact that this theory has gained traction in the media has dangerous implications for freedom and democracy in Malaysia.

The pro-Najib forces seem to be growing bolder and bolder day by day to ensure that their version get more attention, rather than the version advanced by those who are opposing Najib.

Headed by none other than Abdul Rahman Dahlan, minister of urban wellbeing, housing, and local government, the pro-Najib forces have gone into overdrive to identify and expose those persons who are behind the 'plot' to overthrow Najib.

In this regard, the pro-Najib forces have obtained the phased-out confessions of one former Sarawak journalist Lester Melanyi through the effort of a pro-Umno NGO leader Ramesh Naidu to "expose" the "sinister" plot of those behind the attempt to "overthrow" Najib.

The so-called plot to topple Najib as exposed by the bankrupt Lester comprises so far of two opposition leaders, some persons in private companies, the editor and owner of Sarawak Report Claire Rewcastle Brown, and the publishers of The Edge.

Probe sidelined by plot

Moreover, Xavier Justo, a Swiss national and former top executive of PetroSaudi International who was involved with 1MDB, has been detained by the Thai police for his alleged role in blackmail. There are rumours that he could have passed valuable information about the wrongdoings of 1MDB to certain persons in Malaysia.

The Malaysian police are expected to interview him anytime in Bangkok and for sure the ongoing conspiracy theory of the plot to oust Najib would gain some traction from the findings.

The noble objectives of setting up the task force to probe into the allegations of Najib's wrongdoings have been set aside.

Now the police and other enforcement agencies have re-orchestrated their role to probe whether there is a plot to oust Najib from power.

The Malaysian public eagerly waiting answers about the sneaky and diabolical wrongdoings of 1MDB will be sorely disappointed about the conduct of the government of Najib. While they might not be able to punish Najib at present, they will certainly look forward to cast their critical votes in the next general elections.

It is beyond comprehension that what started as simple probe into the alleged wrongdoing of Najib and others involved in the 1MDB scam has spiralled into something more sinister and dangerous.

Critics of 1MDB who exercised their constitutional right to expose and rectify the mistakes

of Najib have become the unfortunate victims of a political conspiracy that has been hatched and executed to preserve the decadent regime of Najib and his cronies.

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