

**MACC graft probes reek of double standards**  
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COMMENT It's an open secret that graft probes in this country have reeked of double standards. Now Attorney-General Abdul Gani Patail has virtually confirmed this public suspicion in commenting on the 'Istana Khir' case.

DAP's Sekinchan state assemblyperson Ng Suee Lim had raised the issue in mid-2009.

NONThe agonisingly slow process in bringing former Selangor MB Mohd Khir Toyo (left), the son of Javanese immigrants, to trial was because the AG's Chambers "had to conduct a very thorough probe".

That's a new one. But does it apply equally to all or is used to protect members of the ruling BN?

Suhakam, in its 2008 Annual Report, complained that the authorities had a habit of rushing to judgment in cases involving the opposition.

Presumably this also applies to those in the ruling coalition who had fallen out of favour and have to be sacrificed.

Even if nothing came out of such cases subsequently, as was often the case, the accused would have been stigmatised in the eyes of the people.

The MACC's and AG's thinking in such cases seems to be to bring preliminary charges first, and think of the actual charges and evidence later.

The hope is that those being prosecuted selectively would feel persecuted enough to make mistakes and provide the authorities with incriminating evidence.

We can assume, that the "very thorough" probe explained by Gani was to look for even the slightest excuse to throw out the case involving the istana.

Unfortunately for Toyo and Umno, the beams were sticking out from his eyes. So the case had to come to court. But it would be very surprising if he gets more than a slap on the wrist.

The public had long concluded that Toyo, a trained and qualified dentist on public scholarship, could not have extracted that many teeth to build his istana. It was the MACC and the AG that needed convincing.

Lavish lifestyle

Indeed, it must be the "very thorough probe" mindset that must be holding back the MACC and the AG from dragging Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud before the courts on corruption charges stemming from a lifestyle that he wouldn't be able to explain.

bn supreme council mt meeting sapp sabah issue 190608 taib mahmudBut one great puzzle here is the difficulty in conducting a thorough probe without an investigation file at the MACC on Taib despite at least three reports being lodged recently against the man.

That there is "no investigation against Taib" was confirmed by MACC Advisor Robert Phang recently.

There was no comment from the MACC itself subsequently on Phang's "without fear or favour" statement on Taib (right).

The anti-graft war in Malaysia is being waged somewhere between two extremes i.e. de facto Parti Keadilan Rakyat chief Anwar Ibrahim, a fallen angel, and Taib.

Anwar himself was charged with three counts of corruption, in conjunction with Sodomy 1 in 1988, and quickly put away after being in detention during the trial itself.

The 'corruption' in this case was abusing his office, as deputy prime minister, to get the police to close the file on Sodomy 1.

Taib remains free as a bird because he has a golden licence, unwritten but implied, to do anything that he wants in Sarawak. Both the MACC and the AG are aware of this limit on their powers of investigation, persecution and prosecution.

It stems from the political reality that the ruling BN needs the 31 parliamentary seats in Sarawak to remain in power.

Umno is convinced that only Taib can deliver the seats or at least the great majority given the support he gets from the 70 percent illiterate Ibans in the longhouses.

Previously, the BN needed these seats to keep its two-thirds majority in Parliament. That is no longer possible now even with the Sarawak seats and a further 25 in Sabah and one in Labuan.

Now, Sabah and Sarawak are the BN's electoral fixed deposits to keep it in power with a simple majority. This is something that the MACC and AG have to keep in mind all the time.

The bottomline is that Umno, the MACC and AG in tow, cannot afford to get carried away with their rhetoric on fighting graft in Malaysia.

An equally pertinent point keeping the MACC and the AG away from Taib is the key role he plays as proxy in Sarawak for the ruling elite in Putrajaya.

#### Proxy control

Proxy control of Sabah and Sarawak stems from the ketuanan Melayu factor, conveniently misread from the unwritten social contract of 1957 forged by Tunku Abdul Rahman with MCA and MIC where "the Malays are to lead the politics to compensate for Chinese economic dominance".

Taib's modus operandi on making hay while the sun shines is also the reason why the MACC and the AG look the other way when Umno and BN politicians raid the public treasury under the guise of development.

The final bill to the tax payer is anything from double and triple to ten times what it would have otherwise been under an open and transparent system of tenders.

What the BN politicians are allowed to do, the Pakatan politicians are forbidden to even think about.

The MACC and AG are ever watchful for the slightest hint of corruption in the four opposition-ruled states

Pakatan politicians have been hauled up by the MACC on suspicion of making false claims involving a few ringgit here and there. One political aide even ended up dead, while in the custody of the MACC.

The MACC and AG watch on Pakatan is one of the reasons why some of its legislators have declared themselves 'BN friendly'.

It's also behind the recurrent crisis in PKR. Some of their legislators are shocked to discover that they really have to serve the people and not spend all their time feathering their own nests.

This is unlike some Umno and BN politicians who can afford the luxury of paying lip service to the people's needs while indulging in a lifestyle that even the oil-rich Arab sheikhs would envy.

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