

Liwat-gate: Who's behind this?
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In a
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previous podcast, we've said that it was unlikely that the authorities would sit idly by and let PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim scheme his way into forming the next government.

We speculated that the government might possibly declare an emergency or call for a fresh election. Recently, there has been intense speculation that Umno has been trying to entice PAS to cooperate with it on the basis of Malay unity. And there is always fear that violence might break out if Anwar tries to take over the government. But never in our wildest imagination did we envision that someone would recycle that old allegation of sodomy.

Reports surfaced over the weekend that a personal aide of Anwar had made a police report alleging that the PKR leader had sodomised him in a condo in Kuala Lumpur. This was followed by an immediate press conference where Anwar denied the accusation. To add drama to the whole situation, he later took refuge at the Turkish Embassy because of fear for his personal safety.

anwar ibrahim and saiful bukhari azlan sodomy allegationsThe notion that a 61-year old with a bad back can forcibly sodomise a strapping 23-year old is laughable. This is simply not the kind of thing that anyone, not even Anwar's harshest critic, is going to believe. Instead, people are going to conclude that it's a desperate, politically-motivated conspiracy.

That this desperate move will backfire is already a foregone conclusion. The big question is who is behind this latest move to try to impugn Anwar's character with a tactic dating back to 1998?

We had a look at all the messages and phone calls we received over the weekend from various people to try to identify some trends.

anwar ibrahim sodomy charge not the first time 300608One thing that most people concur is that Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is not behind it. He had the same 'deer caught in the headlights' reaction when asked about the latest developments, just like when Sapp and Yong Teck Lee announced that they no longer had confidence in him.

Furthermore, nothing in his style or demeanor gives us any indication that he has the kind of mean streak that would allow him to agree to this kind of ruthless and dirty tactic. He is no Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

One could not discount, however, the possibility that someone close to Abdullah may have been behind this, in a misguided attempt to help him. But this seems unlikely as any sensible politician would foresee the negative reaction and the public sympathy that would emerge from the repeat of the sodomy allegation.

The issue of who benefits and who loses from all this will be dealt with in tomorrow's podcast but clearly one of the big losers from this is Abdullah. Political pundits, observers and insiders might immediately conclude that he has nothing to do with it but the mass public will naturally conclude it's an attempt by the government to smear Anwar. And who is

the head of the government?

Two camps

So, the natural question is who would have the motive to instigate something like this, knowing full well that such a move would hurt Abdullah? Two camps come to mind.

The first is the natural and obvious one. Who was the one responsible for branding Anwar a sodomite way back in 1998? It's not inconceivable that Mahathir, who still publicly states that he believes that Anwar is a sodomite, somehow had a hand in all this or at the very least encouraged it.

Perhaps he thought this is one way to kill two birds with one stone – discredit Anwar by taint of allegation and hurt Abdullah at the same time. Of course, any serious political watcher would know that such a move would only serve to generate public sympathy for Anwar but when you are blinded by hatred for your enemies, sometimes you do desperate things.

rise and fall of anwar ibrahimThe second person who would benefit from this would be Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak. To be fair, nothing in Najib's character or demeanor suggests that he has the kind of Machiavellian streak that Mahathir possess in copious quantities.

Perhaps someone in his camp, angry at the notion that perhaps Abdullah or his son-in-law, Khairy Jamaluddin, is holding some incriminating documents on the Altantuya case – as alleged by Raja Petra Kamarudin – dreamt up this strategy to undermine Abdullah and give Najib a boost.

If this was the case, the person responsible certainly did not realise that there exists a photo of the alleged victim with the DPM's aide outside Najib's office – a photo that has already been widely circulated on the Internet!

While Abdullah may not have had anything to do with this, it is well within his power – and not to mention, politically advantageous – for him to nip this whole issue in the bud. Kill off the story before it becomes the kind of fiasco that it threatens to be.

Just as Mahathir had used the full force of the state machinery to play up the story, Abdullah could use that same machinery to make it go away. But knowing Abdullah, he would probably stand aside and 'let the police continue their investigation', to the detriment of himself and ultimately his government.

Tomorrow: Liwat-gate - who wins, who loses

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