

The National Feedlot Centre (NFC) Scandal – “Shouldn’t Someone Go To Jail”?

MalaysianMirror.com

November 12, 2011

By Lim Kit Siang

In his new book on the world’s latest financial crisis hotspots, "Boomerang: Travels In the New Third World", journalist Michael Lewis wrote about how the then new Greek Minister of Finance George Papaconstatninou found out when he took office in October 2009 that his country had cooked its deficit figures with a budget deficit of 12.7% of GDP, four times more than the eurozone’s limit, and a public debt of US\$410 billion. The projected Greek deficit of roughly 7 billion euros was actually more than 30 billion.

At his first monthly meeting with European Finance Ministers after he told his counterparts his shocking discovery, a European Finance Minister came up to him and said: "George, we know it’s not your fault, but shouldn’t someone go to jail?"

This is the same question many Malaysians are now asking about the RM250 million National Feedlot Centre (NFC) scandal, especially after the shocking claim by the UMNO Youth leader Khairy Jamaluddin that the purchase of an RM10 million condominium from funds meant for cattle production was a "strategic move", so that the money would not lie idle.

The Prime Minister, Najib Razak or his Deputy Prime Minister, Muhyiddin Yassin, who was Agriculture Minister when the NFC project was first mooted and approved, should answer this question in the minds of most Malaysians: "Shouldn’t someone go to jail?"

If the cast of personalities involved in the NFC scandal had all involved Pakatan Rakyat leaders and their family members, and not the incumbent Minister for Women, Family and Community Development, Shahrizat Abdul Jalil and her family members, there is no doubt that the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) would have swooped in on the case from Day One, the MACC investigators now crawling all over the cases and all the protagonists already subject to intense and sustained grilling ala-Teoh Beng Hock.

But this is not the case as there is total inaction, indifference and disinterest on the part on the MACC with regard to the RM250 million NFC scandal, despite the shocking revelations of a clear misappropriation of public funds in the case of RM10 million from the funds to promote cattle production to purchase a condominium for private benefit and the RM800,000 to pay for the expensive overseas trip of the Minister and her family members on company funds.

Shahrizat’s self-defence that her family does not deserve the allegations as they work very hard has only opened up a Pandora’s Box.

It is time that her husband Mohamad Salleh Ismail, her children Wan Shahimur Izran, Wan Shahimur Izmir and Wan Izzana Fatimah, break their silence.

They should appear in the public to explain the numerous queries, contradictions and inconsistencies which had surfaced since the strictures of the Auditor-General’s Report 2010 about the NFC – especially as the explanations and justifications made on their behalf such as by the UMNO Youth Leader Khairy Jamaluddin have only dragged the Shahrizat family and the NFC scandal deeper into the mud.

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