

**'Cheap shot' shows Soi Lek not secure, says Tee Keat**  
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**By Yow Hong Chieh**

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 19 — Former MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat has described jibes by his successor, Datuk Dr Chua Soi Lek, as a sign of "insecurity" from a leader who oversaw the party's worst ever electoral defeat.

Ong said Dr Chua should explain to MCA members why popular support for the Barisan Nasional (BN) component party has plummeted instead of taking "cheap shots" at someone who could not defend himself.

"He should ask why the party has no support as he is the president now," he told The Malaysian Insider.

During his debate with DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng yesterday, Dr Chua remarked that MCA had rejected Ong because he turned the party from one that took "leftovers" from Umno to one which subsisted only on "crumbs".

But Ong yesterday refused to comment further on the "unethical" swipe by Dr Chua, who wrested the party presidency from the former in March 2010, saying he did not wish to bother responding to such statements.

"Personally, I just brushed it off. I choose to disdain this kind of cheap shot. I was not there to have my say," he said firmly.

"He may call me anything because he won the (party) election, but under his leadership support for the party has nosedived."

Ong (picture) added that both debaters had failed to delve into the topic - "Chinese at the Crossroads: Is the Two-Party System Becoming a Two-Race System?" — and merely talked at each other for an hour.

"They talked about what they wanted (to talk about). In a way, it was more like party propaganda," he said.

Yesterday's debate between Dr Chua and Lim was organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI) and MCA's Institute of Strategic Analysis and Policy Research (INSAP).

The highly anticipated debate — only the second such exchange between senior BN and Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leaders since opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's debate with then-information minister Datuk Seri Shabeery Cheek — was broadcast live on Astro.

Political analysts have criticised the Mandarin debate for veering greatly off-topic and descending into mere political posturing.

Both Dr Chua and Lim said yesterday they would organised another debate on another topic in Malay and English soon.

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