

**PPBM: Don't compromise security with 'One Belt, One Road'**  
**Free Malaysia Today**  
**May 14, 2017**

**Over-dependence on China as the biggest investor will obligate Malaysia to comply with the superpower's demands in the future, says Tariq Ismail,**

PETALING JAYA: PPBM has warned the federal government not to compromise Malaysia's security and social considerations by participating in China's aggressive move to invest in the country through its "One Belt, One Road" initiative.

Its supreme council member, Tariq Ismail, said allowing unrestrained access to Chinese companies would affect security as well as broader foreign relations, as it is likely to obligate Malaysia to comply with China's future demands.

"It might be timely to remind all that China still is a communist country wherein despite there being a class of wealthy individuals, they are frequently tied to the central government," he said.

"I do not mean to sound prejudiced, for Malaysia has always ... pushed for neutrality and freedom," he said in a statement today.

Tariq said making China the single biggest investor "pretty much obligates Malaysia to their demands and throws the balance off-kilter".

Prime Minister Najib Razak is currently among 28 world leaders attending China's Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, being held today and tomorrow in Beijing.

Malaysia is among the strategic nations in Southeast Asia in the massive plan by China to mobilise the Belt and Road concept to boost economic cooperation between the countries.

"Putting the bulk of our national development projects into one basket called China is hardly a prudent move," Tariq said, adding that there should be more diversification.

"In Malaysia's case, there is no dearth of investors willing to share the investment risk of developing Malaysia."

He said PPBM is not opposed to foreign direct investments.

"We actually welcome them as we have always welcomed the Japanese, the Americans, the Koreans, the British and multiple other investor nations, including China."

However, these investments have had “prudent terms”, such as in funding, joint venture project management and control, technology transfer, deployment of local resources, guided by foreign experts and ultimately local ownership, he said.

The terms of Chinese investments in the pipeline, on the other hand, are significantly different, he said.

He said project management and control is completely vested to the Chinese party, including decisions over proprietary technology from China, as well as resourcing and procurement.

“As is evident from various China investments in other nations, as well as the terms for the East Coast Railway Link (ECRL) project, the China approach will be to use China nationals and materials for construction and development.”

“This differs greatly from past national development projects which give priority to local resources all around.”

He alleged that the Forest City project, also driven by Chinese investments, is attracting foreign buyers who will be given permanent resident (PR) status and be served by locals.

He added that “a sudden influx of higher-income foreign PR holders” will not benefit the rakyat much as the effect on the people’s income will not commensurate with the resultant increase in the cost of living.

Questions have also been raised about the impact the Melaka Gateway project, a joint venture between China and Malaysia, would have in allowing the superpower to exert its influence over trade and security in the Straits of Malacca.

Tariq said there are no provisions for technology transfer from the projects.

“We would rather have world-class investments and technology from those genuinely interested in making us a world-class people in a world-class nation.

“We would ultimately like to do all these with our ‘maruah’ (dignity) intact so we might be respected for being truly world-class.”

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Source: <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2017/05/14/ppbm-dont-compromise-security-with-one-belt-one-road/>