

OBSERVATION

PLEASE MISTER : WHOM DO I PAY ?

Now that the Portuguese have truly left their former colonial nest, after more than 450 years, there are a number of anomalies, associated with the newly established Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), anomalies for which there appear to be no ready solution.

The most important of these anomalies is, of course: Who is one to pay in order to get things done?

Confusion reigns in the minds of many as to who is the correct party to receive funds in accordance with the past, tried and true colonial customs and practices.

In the days when the MSAR was simply known as Macau, it was a relatively simple matter of getting the necessary documentation in order to get licences for this or that; or, to get immediate waivers from the building code.

It used to be that one just paid the right party and the documentation appeared on one's desk in short order.

In the days when Macau was controlled by the Portuguese Government, one could parade one's latest conquest, down the Praia Grande or in the Clube Militar, without anybody batting an eyelid.

But, today, most senior officials of the new Government of the MSAR, controlled by the Beijing Government, are unlikely to applaud the antics of an ethnic Chinese mogul, who has luscious lovelies on both arms -- and a wife at home, awaiting supper.

(Aside from more than a little bit of jealousy, there is, also, the question of how Beijing will view such dalliances)

There are some who maintain that there could be an exodus of capital from this little Chinese enclave -- because of the uncertainty of it, all.

There is the growing uncertainty that the rules of the games have changed -- without the players, being told of the details of the new rules.

The rules, as to what constitutes an act of immorality, the rules, as to what constitutes a corrupt act, and the rules, as to what constitutes free enterprise (as opposed to an encroachment on the businesses of the entrenched powers-that-be and the powers-that-shall-be) are all so vague as to be too confusing for many.

'It is all very confusing and very frustrating! I don't know what to make of it all!'

These were the exact words of one past, mini-mogul of the former Macau, who was lamenting his fate with the coming of the new PRC Regime in that territory.

'Can you tell me, Mister: Who is the correct party?' targetnewspapers.com was asked.

Ever since the PRC Government assumed sovereignty over Macau, it appears that there has been an immediate end to the free reign that the Portuguese had, always, encouraged among the well heeled of Macau.

Even the \$HK50-million a week gambling on football matches is beginning to suffer, reports have it.

The gangsters of the MSAR can easily be controlled, of course: They can just be shot in the tried- and-true methods PRC justice if they should get out of line.

But for those who, for the past 3 decades or so, have grown accustomed to the ways of the Portuguese Government's control of the Colony of Macau, the situation is too confusing for words.

There are 2 areas where the important work of defining boundaries must be tackled, immediately, our MSAR sources have explained.

The 2 areas primarily concern prostitution and gambling.

Before the Portuguese left Macau, there was an accepted division in respect of control of Macau's prostitutes: They were either Asian prostitutes or European prostitutes.

The Portuguese Government accepted and endorsed the idea that Asian prostitutes were best controlled by Chinese Triads, while the Europe prostitutes were best organised and controlled by the Russian Mafia.

The Russian Mafia is known to be very adept at European languages and the ways of European prostitutes, while they knew little to nothing of Asian languages and the ways of Asian prostitutes.

For many a decade, the Russian Mafia and the Chinese Triads worked happily together -- and even the prostitutes were happy with their lot.

Also, the heads of the Russian Mafia and the heads of the Chinese Triads knew how much, and to whom, payments should be made.

Today, nothing is clear, sad to say.

With regard to the control and the running of casinos, in the past, it was accepted who would control what, where, when and how.

Today, the shareholding structure of gambling is unclear.

And there is widespread confusion as to where to deposit the tens of millions of patacas and dollars, which the casinos are amassing, daily.

Also, of course, there is the question, again: Who should be paid for his, or her, help in maintaining order in the casinos; and, which organisation is best suited for the defense of casino property.

There is some speculation as to whether or not some of the soldiers of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), stationed in the MSAR, may be asked to do a little moonlighting in order to clarify the situation for the benefit of all concerned.

After all, reports have it, the PLA is owned and operated by officers, who know a lot about business and finance.

-- E N D --