

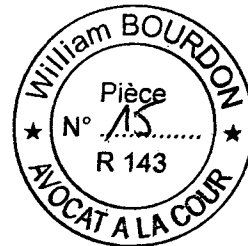
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ITEM 10.3

3 pages

Speech by Najib Tun Razak in Parliament in March 2009 with regard to the purchase of the two Scorpene submarines and that he had never met Altantuya Sharriibuu

prime minister states he never met Altantuya but do.k : Altantuya was in the water when he launched the 1st submarine in Polynesia



Najib: I have never met Altantuya

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by V. Vasudevan and Marc Joseph

KUALA LUMPUR: Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday reiterated that he had never known or met murdered Mongolian model Altantuya Shaariibuu. "Despite the wild allegations against me, I believe it is best for me not to comment as the matter is still being heard in court. "As a responsible citizen, I will say again that I have never known or even met this woman before. I pray that the court will continue to seek justice and uphold the law without any interference," he said in winding up the debate on the Royal Address.

Several opposition MPs, debating the motion of thanks to the King, had linked Najib to the late model. The allegations triggered heated exchanges between government backbenchers and the opposition.

Najib's response on the Altantuya case came at the tail-end of his hour-long speech, which was largely delivered without interference from questioning MPs. He earlier told the House that there were no improprieties in the government's acquisition of military hardware.

Najib, the defence minister, said the acquisition of two Scorpene submarines from France and 18 Sukhoi jet fighters from Russia were done through direct negotiations with the respective countries.

For the submarines, he said the contract valued at STG1.084 billion (RM5.5 billion) included the actual acquisition price of STG969.15 million and co-ordination and support services worth STG114.96 million.

"The claims that RM350 million was paid to Perimekar Sdn Bhd as commission are not true.

"No commission was paid. The RM350 million was the value of the work done by Perimekar Sdn Bhd as the project services provider," he said in reply to a question from Datuk Ibrahim Ali (Ind-Pasir Mas).

To a suggestion from Ibrahim, who called on Najib to take people who slandered him on the submarine and jet deals to court, Najib said he did not need to as it was all a political ploy by the opposition.

Najib told the House that the agreement to acquire the Scorpene submarines was signed on June 5, 2002 between the Malaysian government, DCNS from France and Navantia of Spain.

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DCNS, a French government-owned company, and Navantia were engaged as the submarine providers while Perimekar Sdn Bhd came on board as project services provider.

Najib said the purchase of the Sukhoi jets was made directly through the Rosoboronexport company, which was owned by the Russian government.

He said IMT Defence (M) Sdn Bhd, which is the sole representative for Rosoboronexport in Malaysia, was appointed by the Russian company.

"The government is not involved in business dealings between the two companies. I must stress that the government did not pay any commission to IMT Defence (M) Sdn Bhd as claimed."

Najib said for both the Scorpene and Sukhoi acquisitions, the cost differed from purchases by other countries depending on the specifications.

Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (PKR-Permatang Pauh) had asked why the Malaysian Scorpene had cost more than those purchased by Chile and India.

Najib said he could not reveal the extra fittings or equipment due to security reasons.

On Iran's expulsion from the Defense Services Asia Exhibition and Conference 2008, he said the decision was made on technical grounds and not due to influence from Western countries.

"Iran was initially allowed to participate on grounds that they display items that are not listed in United Nations Security Council resolutions.

"However, they were found to have contravened this requirement and the ministry was forced to end their participation."