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KUALA LUMPUR, JUNE 19 (BERNAMA) -- THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT TAKE LEGAL ACTION AGAINST THE BRITISH NEWSPAPER +OBSERVER+ FOR ALLEGING THAT MALAYSIA RECEIVED KICKBACKS FROM BRITAIN IN CONNECTION WITH A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON ARMS PURCHASE AS THE REPORT IS BASELESS, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

REPLYING TO A SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION FROM ENCIK LIM KIT SIANG (DAP-TANJUNG) IN THE DEWAN RAKYAT, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT KNEW THE ACTUAL MOTIVE OF THE NEWSPAPER IN MAKING THE UNFOUNDED ALLEGATION TO DISCREDIT THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT.

HE SAID THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND A WEST ASIAN COUNTRY, AGAINST WHICH WORSE ALLEGATIONS HAD BEEN MADE IN THE REPORT, ALSO DID NOT TAKE ANY ACTION.

+WHY SHOULD WE DO SO?+ HE ASKED. +WE KNOW THE MOTIVE OF THE NEWSPAPER OWNER WHICH IS CLEARLY LINKED TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNED WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT FOR THE PURCHASE OF WEAPONS WORTH MORE THAN FOUR BILLION STERLING POUND,+ HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE ALLEGATIONS WERE DIRECTED MORE AT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND MALAYSIA WAS ONLY MENTIONED AS A COUNTRY INVOLVED IN THE PURCHASE OF THE MILITARY EQUIPMENT. -- MORE  
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HE SAID THE NEWSPAPER'S OWNER, A WEALTHY BUSINESSMAN IN BRITAIN, HAD A MISUNDERSTANDING WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT OVER HIS FAILURE TO BUY A CHAIN OF LUXURY STORES THERE.

THE PROBLEM HAD BEEN CLEARLY EXPLAINED TO THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT AND IT WAS NOT INTERESTED IN TAKING ANY ACTION AGAINST THE NEWSPAPER, HE ADDED.

DESCRIBING ENCIK LIM'S QUESTION AS +POLITICAL TALK+, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO DENIED ALLEGATIONS THAT THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT HAD BRIBED THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

DEPUTY DEFENCE MINISTER DATUK ABANG ABU BAKAR, REPLYING TO THE ORIGINAL QUESTION BY ENCIK FUNG KET WING (DAP-SANDAKAN), SAID THE BUYING OF MODERN WEAPONS WOULD NOT JEOPARDISE THE CONCEPT OF A ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY (ZOPFAN) IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

HE SAID THE CONCEPT DID NOT MEAN THAT PRIORITY SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN TO THE NATION'S DEFENCE AND SECURITY. -- BERNAMA  
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