

18 OCT 2001

Najib-US

MINDEF DENIES MEDIA REPORT ON ALLEGED ENCROACHMENT BY US BOMBER

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 18 (Bernama) -- The Defence Ministry today denied a media report that a United States B-2 Stealth bomber allegedly encroached into Malaysian airspace last Sunday.

Its minister, Datuk Seri Mohamed Najib Tun Razak, said that investigations conducted by the ministry found the allegation to be baseless.

"The investigations also found that no combat aircraft has flown into Malaysian airspace," he told reporters after a call by the new US ambassador to Malaysia, Marie T. Huhtala, at his office here.

Najib was commenting on a report over TV3's "Buletin Utama" last Monday that a Malaysia Airlines (MAS) passenger claimed to have seen the bomber on a flight from Hong Kong to Sabah.

Asked on discussions during the 40-minute meeting with Huhtala, Najib said that according to Huhtala, the US government understands Malaysia's stand on the terrorism issue and appreciates Malaysia's preparedness to cooperate to counter terrorism in whatever form.

Huhtala also stated that the administration of President George W. Bush understands the reasons for Malaysia disagreeing to the US retaliatory strikes on Afghanistan.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has stated that Malaysia disagrees to the US action as this will cost the lives of innocent people.

"The stand taken by Malaysia does not mean that we are supporting the Taliban but we do not wish to see those who are innocent becoming victims," he said.

Asked to comment on the New York Times report that Malaysia may be a target of future US attacks, Najib said Huhtala has stated at the meeting that the US government does not regard Malaysia as a country which harbours terrorists.

Therefore, he said, the US media report was baseless and unfounded.

-- BERNAMA

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