

Najib pressures Saudis to probe Anwar's funders
Malaysiakini.com
January 28, 2011

Prime Minister Najib Razak had last year exerted pressure on Saudi Arabia to investigate allegations that Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim received campaign funds from the oil-rich state for the upcoming general election.

According to global broadcaster CNN, which has seen the secret report from the Saudi probe, no evidence was found that key Saudi personalities had financed Anwar.

azlanNajib had apparently told the Saudis that the Malaysian government suspected two senior Saudi princes of involvement.

"There is no evidence any Saudi official ever supported Anwar Ibrahim" and "claims of support from the Saudi royals named in the initial report [names redacted] were found to be without basis," CNN quoted the nine-page summary of the secret report.

In an immediate reaction, Anwar said the investigation showed that Najib was terrified of facing him in the general election, which is expected to be held either later this year or in 2012.

"I'm not surprised that the prime minister would go as far as going overseas, not to attract foreign investments, but to stop and malign me," said Anwar in the wake of the CNN report.

He said that Najib was so fearful of the opposition Pakatan Rakyat that he dare not accept the challenge for a public debate on the country's economic policies.

Anwar has previously been accused by his detractors for his links with US-based think-tank International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), said to be a Muslim Brotherhood front involved in financing terrorist networks.

The opposition leader is a former board member of IIIT, which was raided by FBI in 2002 on suspicion of links with terrorist financing, but no charges were filed.

Muslim Brotherhood gives support to candidates

CNN said that the Saudi investigation uncovered "something very different - and more alarming".

The probe found hundreds of millions of dollars of Saudi money had been funnelled to leading Islamist politicians and political activists overseas, said CNN.

"It also found that al-Qaeda and the Taliban were still able to use Saudi Arabia for fund-raising, despite numerous measures to choke off those sources of cash.

"The nine-page summary of the secret report states that the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist political group present in many Muslim countries, was trying 'through its many affiliated charities and organisations - often with the funding of unwitting private Saudi citizens - to spread its influence by providing support for candidates in Islamic

democracies'."

CNN quoted a source who said that "money in Muslim Brotherhood hands was 'occasionally' given to terror group al-Qaeda.

"The report reveals a complex web of Islamic charities and banks - often involved in funding legitimate humanitarian projects - as unwitting facilitators of the illicit transfers.

"And it says that over several decades 'a handful of Saudi and other Arab individuals and organisations' had been supporting 'the same groups that Arab, US and European governments have long suspected of having close ties to extreme militant organisations that have been accused of supporting terrorist activities around the world'."

Najib refused to comment on the CNN report when questioned by journalists today.

"I don't want to comment on that... It is pertaining to the Saudi's investigation," he said.

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