

In ashes row, Nazri likens Chin Peng to Osama

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By Lee Long Hui

In defending the government's stand not to allow the late Chin Peng's ashes to be brought back, a minister likens the former Communist Party of Malaya leader to Osama bin Laden.

NONECulture and Tourism Minister Nazri Abdul Aziz said that when the US special forces had gunned down the terror network al-Qaeda leader, his remains were buried at sea.

In that context, he added, the Malaysian government was not doing "something out of the ordinary".

"I don't think we should apologise to anybody because as you know, Osama (left) is also regarded a terrorist (like Chin Peng), what did (the United States) President (Barack) Obama do?"

"The body disappeared and was not brought back to Saudi Arabia, US or anywhere else, it was dropped into the sea.

"What we are doing is not something out of the ordinary, there is a reason behind it. And the Americans and those people who had suffered (from the 911 attack) did not protest (on Osama being buried at sea).

"Osama bin Laden... you tell me, where is his body now?" he told reporters after officially opening an art fair in Kuala Lumpur.

chin peng interview 021209 03Former Party Communist of Malaya (CPM) secretary-general Chin Peng, born Ong Boon Hua in 1924, was pronounced dead at 6.20am on Monday in Bangkok. Coincidentally, Monday was Malaysia Day.

According to one of his comrades, Chin Peng (right) had always hoped that he would be buried at his birth place in Sitiawan, Perak.

However, several cabinet ministers, including the Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, have rejected calls to allow Chin Peng's remains to return on grounds that he is a terrorist.

On the other hand, when Osama was buried at sea by the US military, Islamic

affairs minister Jamil Khir Baharom said that the move was an insult to Muslims.

'Not a racial issue'

Although CPM, led by Chin Peng, has been recognised for taking up arms against Japanese invaders, Nazri said that those who deem Chin Peng to be a patriot do not understand history.

NONEHe said that the war between CPM and the government did not end until mid-1970s and the police and army personnel who suffered from the war are still alive.

He denied claims that the decision to bar Chin Peng's remains was race-based, but instead called it a national issue in view of the destruction and suffering caused by CPM.

"The policemen and army (were) died, they are not (all are) Malay, there were non-Malay also. And he (Chin Peng) fought against the formation of this country.

"Today we are a 'Malaysia', a very successful nation, if we have succumb to this pressure (from CPM), we could not be what we are today," he said.

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