

WSJ told to show proof of 1MDB-election funds link

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By Kow Gah Chie

An Umno leader today demanded that the Wall Street Journal substantiate its recent news report that 1MDB funds were diverted to bankroll Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's 13th general election campaign.

Failing so, he said, the influential American business newspaper should retract its report and stop making baseless allegations.

"WSJ is trying to accuse us of spending 1MDB money to buy votes in the election. This is a very serious allegation on their part. What proof do they have?" asked Umno supreme council member Tajuddin Abdul Rahman.

"Malaysia had gone through 13 general elections and 1MDB didn't exist during the first 12 polls. Are they trying to say that without 1MDB, we couldn't have made it go through the election?"

"If they don't have enough evidence, stop all these wild allegations," the agriculture and agro-based industry deputy minister told Malaysiakini when contacted in Vietnam where he is attending an Asean Food event.

"I don't care if they are international media, we weren't spending that much of money. If not, the Election Commission would have come against us," he said.

"The West, their media and certain lobby groups and writers are always against us.

"I can also make allegation. I want to ask WSJ, what's is their hidden agenda? Is it for their love of Malaysia?" he asked.

Despite being close to the West, Tajuddin said, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak was an independent leader who did not bow to them.

West won't help

"Najib is very sympathetic and helpful to the Palestinians who were criminalised by the West. Najib went to show his support. Certain group in the West are now not happy with Najib," he said.

"Certain newspapers in the West are also backed by certain NGOs and individuals with vested interests," he said.

"The west is pro-Anwar Ibrahim. If they can have it, they want Anwar as prime minister," he said.

"When we hit by floods and earthquakes, where are they (the West)? Are they helping us? They are not [...] it's our government and people, not the WSJ and the West," he added.

Last Friday, the WSJ reported that 1MDB's funds were used to bankroll Najib's election campaign and this was achieved by having 1MDB making an overpriced purchase of power assets from the Genting Group in 2012.

Genting then made a donation to a foundation controlled by Najib shortly before the 13th general election and WSJ implied the funds were used for campaigning by Najib's Umno party.

"Though set up to help underprivileged Malaysians through education and sport, this charity foundation soon got involved in spending that appeared designed to help Najib retain power in the May 2013 election," said the WSJ report.

1MDB, which has accumulated RM41.8 billion in debts, is owned by the Finance Ministry, a portfolio held by Najib.

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