

Suspend TPPA talks with 'credibility crisis' Najib, US urged

MalaysiaKini.com

Sept 30th, 2015

Koh Jun Lin

Pakatan Harapan has urged the United States to suspend all Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) negotiations with Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

This is in view of media reports claiming that Najib is currently being investigated by the US Department of Justice, which Pakatan said creates a conflict of interest for Najib and puts Malaysia's sovereignty at stake.

"Considering the crisis of credibility faced by Najib, Pakatan is of the opinion that the US government's strong support towards his administration needs to be reevaluated as a step towards maintaining good relations between Malaysia and the US that has been built over time, and in the future," said opposition leader Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail at a press conference today.

The New York Times had reported last week that a US grand jury has opened a corruption inquiry into Najib and several individuals close to him, quoting unnamed sources.

The US Justice Department, which reportedly handles the investigation, had declined to comment on the report according to the NYT, while the Malaysian police had said that it has yet to be notified of such an investigation.

The Prime Minister's Office has also declined to comment.

Obama urged to cancel meeting with Najib

Meanwhile at its press conference today, Pakatan also urged Najib not to use the supposed probe as a reason to sign the free trade agreement.

They also urged US President Barack Obama to cancel his meeting with Najib scheduled in November until the investigations have been completed to avoid negative perception against the duo.

"It is only after Najib resolves the credibility crisis and issues related to allegations of abuse in 1MDB can the negotiations involving national sovereignty continue," said Wan Azizah.

The TPPA is a multinational free trade agreement in which the US is a main proponent. Apart from Malaysia, other countries involved in its secretive negotiations include Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Mexico, and Canada, among others.

Despite the secrecy however, parts of the purported draft agreement had been leaked on several occasions.

For TPPA's critics, one contentious component of the draft agreement is that it incorporates a system for investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS), which could supposedly affect a country's ability to enact public interest laws - such as to control the use of tobacco - by forcing governments to pay hefty compensations for corporations that stand to lose from such legal changes.

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