

Tian Chua: Scorpene missiles overpriced by 20%
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Tian Chua (PKR-Batu) has filed an emergency motion to discuss allegedly overpriced armaments for Malaysia's two Scorpene submarines.

NONETHis follows recent government disclosure that the procurement of 40 Exocet SM-39 surface-to-air missiles and 30 Black Shark torpedoes (right) totalled 219 million euro.

According to Chua's motion, the defence ministry has paid 20 percent more than the market price, after comparing similar procurement by other countries.

"According to Pakistan's procurement records, the SM-39 costs 3.07 million euro each while the Portugese bought Black Sharks at two million euro each," said Chua.

Based on these figures, the total cost should be 182.8 million euro, a 20 percent difference (36 million euro) from what was Malaysia has paid.

save tian chua dinner 200610 tian chuaHe also cited a report by influential US-based think-tank Foreign Policy in Focus (FPIF), which said in a 2005 report that many arms manufacturers generally used well-connected Malaysians as their lobbyist for contracts.

"The commission paid to such representatives is estimated to range from 10-20 percent," said Chua (left) in his motion quoting from the FPIF report.

Chua's motion, filed today, urges the Defence Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi to explain to the Dewan Rakyat whether any middlemen or politicians were involved in the procurement of the missiles and torpedoes.

Cheaper alternatives 'overlooked'

His motion also urged the Dewan Rakyat to discuss the delay in the delivery of the armaments, claiming that one of the two submarines currently in Malaysia's possession - the KD Tunku Abdul Rahman - was unarmed.

azlan"This is a form of pembaziran (wastage) and can potentially pose a security crisis for Malaysia," read the motion.

In concluding, Chua argued that such matters much be discussed by the House because the professionalism of the Defence Ministry staff and the former Defence Minister Najib Abdul Razak who oversaw the deal was in question.

Previously, Chua had questioned the procurement because there were similar armaments available in the market at much cheaper prices - including US-made Tomahawk missiles and the Chinese-made C-802 Yingji missiles - which function similarly to the expensive French-made Exocet SM-39.

He further alleged that there is a delay in the delivery of the missiles and torpedoes, a charge which Zahid has denied.

Malaysia's second submarine, the KD Tun Razak, is scheduled to arrive in Lumut on July 2. Previous reports suggest that the submarine is en route in the Indian Ocean after leaving

Toulon, France on April 30.

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