

**Report fabricated, says CNN  
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CNN has stringently denied that Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim paid the global news broadcaster to do an interview early this month.

"The story about CNN accepting payment from anyone for Anwar Ibrahim to appear on 'Connect the World' is clearly fabricated," said a CNN spokesperson, who is based in Hong Kong where the network's Asia headquarters are located.

azlan "It is disturbing that no effort was made to contact us and independently verify these groundless allegations before they were subsequently reported as fact."

Malay-language daily Utusan Malaysia had last Friday kicked off the controversy with its July 9 report headlined 'Anwar alleged to have paid CNN'.

The report referred to Trevino Strategies and Media Inc president Joshua Trevino, who wrote in a US-based news portal The New Ledger alleging that Anwar hired people with strong media contacts, particularly in CNN, to convince Jewish lobbyists that he is not anti-Israel.

Trevino had lamented that the CNN's 'Connector of the Day' interview on July 2 was "tame" in questioning Anwar's anti-Zionist rhetoric.

azlan Following the Utusan report, a number of Umno leaders attacked Anwar over the alleged "paid" interview.

"If it is true that Anwar paid for the CNN interview, it shows that he stoop so low to the United States and the Jews... he will do anything to achieve his ambition of becoming the prime minister," said Umno vice-president Mohd Shafie Apdal the day after the Utusan report.

Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, who is also Umno deputy head, said the allegation shows that Anwar was desperate.

"He can use the media. If he has to pay, then let him pay to clarify his position and the lies he told when he went abroad," he was quoted as saying by New Straits Times in a July 11 report headlined 'Muhyiddin: Anwar paid CNN'.

Another round of attacks

Utusan, an Umno-owned newspaper, has since ratcheted up the tempo against Anwar, this time with another report on Sunday alleging that the PKR supremo was a CIA stooge.

The report is based on the posting of an obscure American blogger, Elaine Meinel Supkis, who claimed that her source was "a Jewish editor of the warmongering Washington Post".

Utusan cited Meinel's posting - bizarrely entitled 'CIA and Mossad want Anwar Ibrahim assassinated' - which claimed that Anwar serves to protect the US' interests and to undertake covert planning on its behalf in Malaysia.

This sparked another round of attacks from other Umno leaders, including Home Minister

Hishammuddin Hussein and Information Communication and Culture Minister Rais Yatim.

In an immediate reaction, Anwar said the denial by CNN was proof that Umno leaders were peddling lies to tarnish his image.

"The denial not only exposes the lies by right-wing extremists media organisation the New Ledger, but also exposes the plot by Utusan Malaysia, which is Umno's mouthpiece, to slander me," said Anwar.

He said that the denial showed that there was no effort by Utusan Malaysia to verify their report with CNN, adding that such instances was not surprising.

Anwar also slammed Utusan Malaysia for basing their report on solely an article by blogger Elaine Supkis, whom he mockingly said was "apparently a famous blogger", and another by Joshua Trevino without verifying the facts.

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