

No parliamentary oversight on defence spending
Malaysiakini.com
Disember 11, 2010

A parliamentarian has today lamented that there was no oversight on the country's burgeoning defence spending which amounted to almost RM100 billion over the past 10 years.

pakatan cij parliament pc 131108 sivarasaSubang MP R Sivarasa said despite the hefty military spending, there is no standing committee in Parliament to examine the defence expenditure.

"Among the many dysfunctional institutions in Malaysia, one of them is the Parliament. Yes, we are supposed to debate the defence expenditure, but the government can always bulldoze it through," said Sivarasa at the launch of a new book, 'Questioning Arms Spending in Malaysia: From Altantuya to Zikorsky'.

"There is no meaningful oversight," he said.

Sivarasa added that standing committees in Parliament are supposed to debate and discuss on such expenditures.

"All our neighbouring countries have a standing committee on defence, except for us... A modern parliament should have a committee of defence. This is such a big expenditure," he said.

Arms race in Asean 'wasteful and futile'

kua kia soongMeanwhile, Kua Kia Soong, the Suaram director and academician who wrote 'Questioning Arms Spending in Malaysia', described the arms race in the region as both wasteful and futile.

According to him, many Asean countries, but particularly Malaysia, has been on an arms race since the end of Cold War.

"Since the early 1990s, the Asean countries have been the only region in the world where defence spending has increased by more than 10 percent since the end of Cold War," he said at a forum entitled 'Towards an Alternative Defence Policy and a Culture of Peace' which was held in conjunction with the book launch.

NONEQuoting the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri) Report 2009, Kua said that Southeast Asia has seen deliveries of major conventional defence equipment nearly double over the past five year, as compared with the period between 2000 and 2004.

"Malaysia led the regional Southeast Asia regional pack with a surge of 722 percent between 2005 and 2009, while Singapore was up by 146 percent and Indonesia 84 percent," he said.

Despite that, Kua, who is also a Chinese educationist, said that not a single new Chinese or Tamil school has been built since 1957.

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