

Mukhriz attacks gov't in Parliament
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The morality of the government was put to the test in the Dewan Rakyat today when a controversial BN backbencher stood up to ask why the allegedly biggest corporate supporter to the US military campaign in Iraq has been allowed to invest in Malaysia.
MCPX

mukhriz mahathir gaza fund 010208 seriousMukhriz Mahathir (Umno-Jerlun) demanded why Halliburton, a top American oil and gas services company and defence contractor, has been allowed to open a factory in Johor when the government had in the past professed to be against the war in Iraq.

"This corporation is involved in the murder of more than one million innocent Iraqi civilians and I want to know why our government has allowed it to open a factory in Johor," he asked.

The youngest son of former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who like his father, has been an ardent critic of the Iraq war and US president George W Bush.

In response, International Trade and Industry Deputy Minister Jacob Dungau Sagan said that Halliburton - which has a US\$7 billion no-bid oil and infrastructure contract in Iraq - was allowed to set up a factory only after the corporation no longer associates itself with supplying arms.

"We granted Halliburton licence to operate on April 6 last year and they started operating in October 2007 the same year. This means that the licence was granted only after the corporation had stopped manufacturing military products," said Sagan.

He added that Halliburton's factory in Johor only manufactures tools and products meant for the oil and gas industry like packers, nipples, flow control equipment, safety valves and other parts.

Apart from that, Sagan also said that it was imperative for the government to attract foreign investments and suggested that it was in Malaysia's interest to have Halliburton invest here as it is one of world's biggest corporations.

Build and run US military bases

Mukhriz however was not satisfied with the minister's reply and argued that he was of the view that no corporation which is involved directly in the US invasion of Iraq be allowed to invest in Malaysia.

"Yes, I agree that we have to attract foreign investments but my question is this: can't the government filter out corporations investing in this country so that those profiting from blood money would no be allowed to invest here?" asked Mukhriz.

Sagan argued that the government had studied the background of Halliburton and found that it was one of its subsidiaries, Kellogg, Brown & Root (KBR), that was directly linked to

the war in Iraq.

One of KBR's key activities are the construction and running of US military bases, some in secret locations.

The deputy minister also said that because of the massive negative impact that the parent company had received from its subsidiary's involvement in the Iraq war, Halliburton had since divested all its shares in KBR.

Meanwhile, PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang demanded Sagan to explain if the ministry was aware that Halliburton was linked to allegedly Zionist fundamentalist groups in US which back the Israeli government.

"Has the government taken into consideration the sensitivity of Malaysian Muslims or is the Malaysian government receiving political pressure from foreign powers (to allow its corporations to invest in this country)," asked Hadi.

Sagan however did not answer Hadi's question. Instead he said the government was doing its best to develop Malaysia based on Islamic and ethical principles.

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