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IMDB

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from Mr. Najib's ruling United Malays National Organization this year for criticizing the leader's handling of Malaysia's own IMDB investigations. "If he refuses to step down he is only going to put the party in jeopardy."

Mr. Najib has been prime minister of this Southeast Asian country since 2009 and is fairly secure in the post due to a divided opposition, weak

media and the effective sidelining of opponents within his party.

The UMNO has been at the center of every government since independence in 1957, and remains popular with the Malay Muslim majority through its control of public spending and patronage. The ruling coalition, the National Front, won an important state election in May.

In the past year The Wall Street Journal, citing Malaysian and global investigations, has reported how investigators have traced hundreds of mil-

lions of dollars that originated at IMDB that have been spent to buy artwork, properties and fund a Hollywood movie.

Investigators found that over \$1 billion was transferred to Mr. Najib's personal bank accounts, the majority originating from IMDB and moving via a web of intermediaries.

In April a parliamentary committee in Malaysia found that billions of dollars had gone missing from IMDB and recommended that the fund's senior management face a criminal investigation, but spared Mr. Najib.

Investigations ordered by Mr. Najib into graft allegations at IMDB were undermined by political pressure and a lack of transparency, according to documents and interviews with people involved, the Journal reported in May.

Mr. Najib's office has said it believes the Journal's reporting is part of a politically motivated campaign to unseat him.

Mr. Najib, who was until May the chairman of IMDB's board of advisers, has denied any wrongdoing. The Malaysian attorney general has cleared him of wrongdoing,

saying the funds that went into Mr. Najib's account were a legal political donation from Saudi Arabia, and that most of the money was returned. Saudi Arabia's foreign minister said in April he was "aware" of a "genuine donation" to Mr. Najib, but didn't elaborate.

"The past one year has demonstrated [that] news such as this does not resonate a lot, especially in the rural areas where Mr. Najib's government is deriving most of its support," said Oh Ei Sun, Mr. Najib's former political secretary and a fellow at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

Mr. Najib's ruling coalition won a comfortable victory in 2013 and doesn't face a new election until 2018 at the latest. In the interim, popular opposition politician Anwar Ibrahim is behind bars on a sodomy conviction that he has said was politically motivated.

"Politically, Mr. Najib's position is stable. Most of his opponents in his party have already been dismissed. Meanwhile the opposition is divided among themselves for lack of leadership and common goals," said Ibrahim Suffian,

head of independent polling organization Merdeka Center.

Two of the country's most-read newspapers, The New Straits Times and The Star, controlled by parties in the ruling coalition, focused Wednesday on the government response to the U.S. legal case.

Malaysian social media was polarized. Many Twitter and Facebook users latched on to references in the U.S. complaint to "Malaysian Official 1," who allegedly received hundreds of millions of dollars in funds siphoned from IMDB. A person with direct knowledge of the investigation told the Journal that "Malaysian Official 1" is Mr. Najib.



LAI SENG SIN/REUTERS

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday.

CORRECTIONS & AMPLIFICATIONS

Double Robotics Inc. is based in Burlingame, Calif. A Page One article Thursday about Chinese patent laws incorrectly said the company is based in Menlo Park, Calif.

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