

**Pua demands MinDef explain extra RM6b for APCs**  
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**By Yow Hong Chieh**

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 24 — The Defence Ministry must explain why it paid RM7.6 billion for armoured personnel carriers (APC) procured by DRB-Hicom Bhd for only US\$559 million (RM1.7 billion), Tony Pua said today.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Zahid Hamidi told Parliament last Tuesday his ministry did not have any information about the deal between DRB-Hicom unit Defence Technologies Sdn Bhd (Deftech) and Turkish firm FMC-Nurol Defense System (FNSS) for 257 units of Pars 8x8 APCs.

But Pua said today it was unacceptable for Zahid to say he knew nothing about the deal as the minister had witnessed its signing in February, according to the Turkish press.

“How can he claim to know nothing about the difference in price when he was there (in Turkey) witnessing the signing between the two parties?”

“And the difference in price is so big, surely a responsible government must ask... what are the differences that make up the gap?” the DAP publicity chief told reporters in the Parliament lobby here.

Pua stressed that any government that wanted to rein in its expenditure must be able to account for the RM6 billion difference in pricing.

He added that Zahid should give a proper response in Parliament and not just brush off the question while “acting stupid”.

“I don’t know whether he’s pretending to be stupid or really the ministry doesn’t know anything,” Pua said.

Deftech chief executive Abdul Harith Abdullah said last year the cost of the FNSS contract includes manufacturing and other costs associated with the production of a new combat vehicle.

The Malaysian-developed APC is built from the Pars APC produced by FNSS of Turkey, in co-operation with US company, General Purpose Vehicle.

Deftech is to build 12 variants from the base vehicle, including personnel carriers, anti-tank weapon carriers, command and control as well as anti-aircraft weapon vehicles.

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