

**Pilot Of Missing MAS Plane Could Have Made 'Air Turn Back' - Hishammuddin  
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 9 (Bernama) -- Acting Transport Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein today spoke of the possibility of a missing Malaysia Airlines (MAS) aircraft having made an "air turn back".

As such, he said, the search-and-rescue operation was focusing on a wider area for Flight MH370 which disappeared over the South China Sea on Saturday en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

In aviation terminology, an "air turn back" is the return of an aircraft to the airport of origin as a result of the malfunction or suspected malfunction of any item on the aircraft.

Hishammuddin confirmed that an oil slick was detected in the waters off Vietnam and the Vietnamese authorities were trying to determine whether it was from an aircraft.

"I can confirm that there was an oil slick, but no debris. I was told that Vietnamese aircraft are on the site right now to verify what is actually on the surface of those waters," he told a press conference here.

Hishammuddin also said that further deliberations would be held, mainly among officials of the Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) and Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) and other aviation experts.

MAS Flight MH370, carrying 227 passengers, including two infants, and 12 crew, went missing en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing about an hour after taking off from KLIA at 12.41 am Saturday. It should have landed in Beijing at 6.30 am.

On a report that four passengers with stolen passports had boarded the aircraft, Hishammuddin said: "The names of the four passengers said to have been travelling on fake passports have been sent to our intelligence agency, as well as international intelligence agencies".

He said the international intelligence agencies, which includes the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the United States, agreed to assist the country in the investigation.

Hishammuddin emphasised that it had yet to be confirmed that there had been a security risk, and that the authorities were investigating the whole list of passengers and not just the four names.

At the same press conference, MAS group chief executive officer Ahmad Jauhari Yahya confirmed

that there was no report of any contact having been made with the pilot of Flight MH370 before the aircraft vanished Saturday morning.

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