

New radar after MH370? What for? Stay awake!

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The current hoo-ha is on proposals to buy new systems being made by our defence minister, and Tiger was jolted awake from a nap by said hoo-ha. And since Tiger is now up, a look at the hullabalo seems warranted.

As Tiger waits with bated breath for the resolution on the case of MH370, Tiger's whiskers twitch with wonder at some of the statements provided by the defence minister of his home jungle. A new "radar" system? What's wrong with the old one? Has it broken down or something? The last Tiger heard, it was still working fine. It even managed to track a blip that might have been the missing jetliner. So why change it? A rat is scented, and Tiger wants to know where it is.

But as Tiger tracks this rat through cyberspace, Tiger finds that this rat may be larger than it seems, considering that there is now a plan to obtain a new RazakSat-2 for orbit around this planet. A little further down revealed the cost of this new satellite: RM270 million. However, this had ballooned from its initial projected cost of RM170 million, and if the pattern continues, it could go up to RM1 billion, according to Setampin lawmaker Julian Tan.

The argument provided for both the systems was that both would help prevent any more MH370s, but Tiger believes there might be something more here.

The radar, for example, was able to detect the aircraft, and it even recorded on its tapes that the aircraft had overflown Peninsula Malaysia over a few military bases, as well as the island of Penang. Why did the Air Force drop the ball so badly? The first thought that struck Tiger from their response of the plane being a confirmed civilian aircraft, and thus harmless, was that passenger jets were used as part of a terrorist attack against the United States on the 11th of September, 2001. Now, everyone knows that.

Simply put, if a stranger with a sign that says "I'm harmless" waltzed into your home uninvited, Tiger is sure that there would be a response, or at least some indignation. But the Air Force allowed this unidentified flying object through Malaysian airspace without a single response! Not even to call the airports and ask if there was an emergency!

The lack of a response there could not have done wonders for the country's image, considering other nations had professed that they would have sent up at least one fighter jet to identify the radar blip and/or force it to land. Then again, Tiger knows hindsight is 20/20.

Now here comes the hook. Why was the blip not reported? Was the operator or crew on shift at that time taking a cat-nap? Or maybe stepped out for some nasi lemak and teh tarik? Or was there no crew on duty that night? Seemingly impossible, considering they are in charge of the nation's defence.

And in the aftermath of all this comes the bid for a new satellite. Is it really the time for this bid for a satellite? Considering Malaysia is already looking to lease fighter jets in lieu of buying them, Tiger really does not think the satellite necessary. Another point against the satellite as

noted by Opposition MPs is that Google Earth has a resolution of 0.65 metres square, while the satellite will only have a resolution of a square metre.

Which leads Tiger to the next point, that Malaysia has been called “all hardware, no software”. For context, the author of that line meant that Malaysia may possess some good hardware in terms of military assets and the latest technology, but it becomes useless as there is no compatible “software”, or people that actually know how to utilise the hardware to its maximum potential. Netizens have also expressed their sentiments supporting that statement, as has PAS Parit Buntar MP Mujahid Yusof Rawa.

Noteworthy as well is the submarine rescue ship that Malaysia has on standby. For a hefty RM6 million per month, paid to Target Resources Sdn Bhd (Tiger would like to note here that the company has been pinpointed as a favoured company of the Ministry of Defence in the past, as noted here), this ship is to stand ready to aid in submarine search-and-rescue operations. But at RM72 million per annum, for the past 7 years, for the ship to stand idle?

Not to mention there are conflicting reports regarding the deployment of the vessel. The Wall Street Journal noted that the vessel, coined the MV Mega Bakti, was deployed during the search in the South China Sea. However, blogger Sakmongkol (better known as Mohd. Ariff Sabri bin Hj. Abdul Aziz, MP of Raub, Pahang) has indicated that the vessel was not deployed and remains idle. Remember that rat that Tiger mentioned earlier? That rat is now the size of a deer.

So what indeed is Malaysia doing with its defence budgets throughout this time? Sure, salaries have to be paid, and assets maintained, but what about living assets? Are the Malaysian Armed Forces being trained to their fullest potential for the assets we have, or is the training budget disappearing somewhere else altogether?

These are not small amounts Tiger is referencing here, considering the defence budget has numbered between RM13 billion to RM16 billion over just the past four years.

There are too many questions unanswered here, and the frustration of a lack of clear logical answers is annoying Tiger to no end, and Tiger will now head off to look for sustenance instead of getting a headache over this.

GRRRRR!!

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