

Rafale Aircraft Deal Raised During Malaysia, France Talks

PUTRAJAYA, March 28 (Bernama) -- The issue of France's Rafale fighter jet was raised during Malaysia and France talks in Malaysia's administrative capital here Tuesday.

Malaysia's Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Malaysia was looking into the possibility of a deal with France but not ready yet to make a decision.

"We take note of your (Rafale) success in several countries and the possibilities of that particular aircraft being a subject of cooperation and collaboration with those countries as well," he said in a joint press conference here today with visiting French President Francois Hollande.

Hollande arrived in Malaysia yesterday for a two-day state visit to Malaysia.

Hollande said France would provide the necessary support to Malaysia in relation to the Rafale, manufactured by Dassault Aviation SA.

"I know you will be making a decision and against that background, we want to provide necessary support.

"Our ministers are already working to that effect, all I would like to say is that Rafale is the best jet in the category. We propose to discuss the prices and the specifications," he said via a translator.

Meanwhile, Najib said both leaders also talked about the need to work closely together to fight militancy, extremism and global terrorism.

"I also share with Hollande our experience and some of the challenges we face. We agreed we should work together," he said.

Najib added that he also presented a copy of the deradicalisation module to fight extremism, which has been successfully carried out in this country with a success rate of about 95 per cent, to Hollande.

"I hope this could be our contribution in addition to having our digital messaging centre as well as moderate global movement.

"We believe moderation is the key principle for us to adopt and that will be our answer to the growing influence of militancy and extremism," he said, adding that Hollande's visit would usher a stronger bilateral relations between the two countries.

"We know each other for a long time and develop close bilateral ties in many areas. I am confident the relationship will not only endure but will get deeper and stronger in years to come," he said.

Earlier, Najib and Hollande witnessed the signing of two letters of intent on defence and education.

The defence agreement was signed between Malaysia's Defence Minister, Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein with his French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian, on exchanged and classified information in defence cooperation.

The education agreement was signed by deputy vice chancellor of Universiti Putra Malaysia, Dr V. Renuganth on behalf of the government of Malaysia and president director-general of Centre for International Cooperation in Agronomic Research for Development, Dr Michel Eddi.

The agriculture agreement aimed at sustainable agricultural landscapes in Southeast Asia.

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