

PRESS CONFERENCE: MH370

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DATO' SERI HISHAMMUDDIN TUN HUSSEIN

ACTING MINISTER OF TRANSPORT

ATTENDED BY:

TAN SRI ONG KA TING

THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPECIAL ENVOY TO CHINA

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AHMAD JAUHARI YAHYA, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF MAS

Introductory statement

Malaysia continues to work on the diplomatic, technical and logistical challenges involved in the search for MH370.

We are still awaiting information from the Australian search and rescue operation as to whether the objects shown in the satellite images released by Australia yesterday are indeed related to MH370.

In the meantime, we are continuing search and rescue operations in the rest of the southern and northern corridors. I will now give you a brief operational update.

1. Operational update

Search efforts southwest of Perth continue, and the Australian authorities are intensifying their efforts in the area. HMAS Success is due to reach the vicinity of the objects tomorrow.

China has deployed 5 ships and 3 ship-borne helicopters, which are currently heading toward the southern corridor. 3 Chinese aircraft (2 Ilyushin IL-76s and 1 Shaanxi Y-8) arrived in Malaysia at 11:00 this morning. They will also be searching in the southern corridor.

Japan is deploying its assets to Perth, including 2 P-3 Orions, to assist with the Australian search efforts.

This morning I have spoken with the acting High Commissioner from the United Kingdom, who confirmed that the Prime Minister has spoken to the Prime Minister of the UK, and that HMS Echo is already heading towards the southern Indian Ocean to support the search effort. He also confirmed that the UK will be providing us with a list of possible assets that can be deployed if needed.

He also has reaffirmed that, in addition to the technical support provided so far, it stands ready to provide further specialist search and investigative assistance once more information about the fate of MH370 becomes known.

I have also been in touch with the French delegation, which is led by the French Ambassador to Malaysia, and includes the man who led the investigation into the Air France 447 crash. They have agreed to assist us with their considerable experience and expertise.

I will also be speaking to the US Secretary of Defence at 21:15 tonight, to request further specialist assets to help with the search and rescue efforts, including remotely-operated vehicles for deep ocean salvage.

The Kazakhstan authorities have assured us that they have found no trace of MH370, and we are awaiting permission for Kazakhstan to be used as a staging point for search operations.

On the police investigation, the Ukraine police have confirmed that the background checks on the Ukrainian passenger have come back clear.

2. Satellite data processing

I would like to briefly discuss the processing of the Inmarsat data.

The investigations team received the complete raw Inmarsat satellite data which included the six handshakes at approximately 15:00 on Wednesday 12th March.

This type of data is not normally used in investigations of this sort. It is only because we have so little other information to go on in this difficult and unprecedented situation that the data is being used.

Upon receiving the raw data, the Malaysian authorities immediately discussed with the US team how this information might be used. The US team and the investigations team then sent the data to the US, where further processing was needed before it could be used.

Initial results were received on Thursday 13th March at approximately 13:30, but it was agreed by the US team and the investigations team that further refinement was needed, so the data was again sent back to the US.

The results were received at approximately 14:30 on Friday 14th March, and presented to the investigations team at a high-level meeting at 21:00 on Friday. The UK AAIB, who had also been processing this data independently, presented their results – which concurred with ours and those of the US team – at that meeting.

The Prime Minister was briefed on this satellite information at 08:00 Saturday 15th March, and publicly announced it at the press conference at Saturday lunchtime. Search and rescue operations were immediately shifted to the northern and southern corridor.

3. Family care

Last night in Kuala Lumpur we held a briefing for the relatives of those on board MH370. As I mentioned in yesterday's statement, the briefing was to update family members on the latest developments, and to answer questions and clear up any confusion.

The meeting was well attended by family members from different nations, including Malaysia, and by representatives from the Chinese Embassy in Kuala Lumpur.

A high-level Malaysian delegation, including representatives from Malaysia Airlines, the Department of Civil Aviation, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Security Council also attended the meeting.

We had a very constructive and frank discussion. Although we answered most of the questions they raised, we could not answer them all. These briefings will continue – at the families' convenience – for as long as the families want them.

The briefing brought the families and the Malaysian authorities closer together, not just in terms of sharing information, but also in terms of listening to the voice of the family

members. The Prime Minister's Special Envoy to China will be co-ordinating the briefings in Kuala Lumpur from now on.

The high-level team I announced yesterday arrived in Beijing last night. Today they met with family members for three and half hours.

4. Concluding remarks

The continues to be a multinational effort co-ordinated by Malaysia and involving dozens of countries from around the world. We continue to receive offers of assistance, including specialist assets that can help with the search and rescue. We welcome all assistance as we continue to follow every credible lead.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SESSION

Q : Sekiranya dua objek yang ditemui di Australia itu tiada kaitan dengan MH370, apakah kerajaan mempunyai perancangan untuk menubuhkan dan sub-centre SAR di koridor utara memandangi ia antara petunjuk selepas ini dan sekiranya ada, apakah kerajaan mempunyai pelan SAR untuk ke sana dan bagaimana dengan penerimaan keluarga selepas mendengar taklimat semalam kerana ada yang mendakwa keadaan agak tegang?

A : Kita sedang membuat persiapan untuk kedua-dua kemungkinan tadi dan... dr segi persiapan dengan keluarga, kita sedia maklum dan kita dapat sekiranya maklumat yang kita terima daripada pihak-pihak yang berkenaan dapat disampaikan kepada mereka secepat mungkin, dalam kedua-dua perkara ini tai malangnya setakat hari ini, setakat pukul 5.40, tidak ada perkembangan yang positif yang untuk kita sampaikan kepada mereka.

Q : Laporan hari ini ada mengatakan ada 4 kapal China dilarang masuk ke kawasan perairan India. So bagaimana Malaysia sebagai ketua operasi untuk menyelaraskan operasi mencari dan menyelamatkan ini supaya lebih berjalan dengan lancar?

A : Laporan itu tidak benar, seperti kenyataan saya tadi, dah beberapa kapal telah pun bertolak ke arah koridor selatan tadi.

Q : Sekiranya petunjuk di Australia ini bukan jawapan kepada penemuan MH370, adakah terdapat petunjuk baharu yang mungkin pihak DS terima dan soalan kedua saya, berapa lama SAR ini akan dijalankan? Adakah selepas signal kotak hitam yang bertahan 30 hari, saya dimaklumkan bertahan 30 hari itu, selepas itu adakah ia akan ditamatkan?

A : tidak. Sebenarnya kita akan teruskan dan masih lagi bersemangat untuk operasi mencari dan insyaAllah untuk menyelamatkan dan apa maklumat yang saya terima daripada pasukan Perancis di mana kapal terbang Perancis mengambil masa 2 tahun untuk kita cari dan dapat balik kotak hitam itu. Ada teknologi-teknologi yang lain yang digunakan selepas 30 hari tempoh yang telah ditetapkan.

Q : Apakah masalah yang bakal atau dihadapi oleh SAR team kita yang menjalankan misi di kedua-dua koridor khususnya di koridor selatan yang melibatkan kawasan pencarian yang luas dan seperti yang kita tahu penemuan 2 objek yang terbaru yang dipercayai serpihan daripada MH370 ni, sedikit sebanyak menimbulkan persoalan mengatakan objek tersebut telah dijumpai memandangkan sumber pada imej satelit tersebut bertarikh pada 16 Mac lepas dan satu lagi seperti yang kita tahu, bekalan bateri bagi menghantar isyarat lokasi kotak hitam pesawat hanya boleh bertahan sehingga 30 hari? Dan bagaimana kita hendak mencari kotak hitam tersebut selepas tempoh tersebut memandangkan setakat ini kita tidak mempunyai sebarang teknologi yang membolehkan kita berbuat demikian dan justeru apakah langkah-langkah seterusnya yang membolehkan kita untuk menemui kotak hitam tersebut?

A : soalan kedua saya dah jawab tadi dimana kepakaran daripada pasukan Perancis, di mana kapal terbang yang terlibat dalam insiden terdahulu juga dijumpai selepas 30 hari. Dan itu sebagai kita bincangkan apa keperluan kita tapi saya berdoa agar kita dapat mengenal pasti dan dapat mencari pesawat berkenaan sebelum tempoh berkenaan. Berhubung kait dengan cabaran untuk kita mencari pesawat ini, memang saya dah nyatakan sebelum ini cabaran di koridor seperti merupakan sala satu cabaran yang perlu kita memberikan fokus yang teramat sangat, dan maklumat yang kita terima daripada pihak Australia yang mengetuai operasi mencari di kawasan itu. Itu merupakan satu perkara yang ada lead yang credible yang saya sebut semalam. Itu mesti dijadikan

tumpuan kita hari ini, kalau itu dapat kita pastikan maka kawasan yang sebegitu luas dapat kita perkecilkan dan kita lihat kepada usaha-usaha lain yang perlu diberi fokus. This is going to be a long hold. I think we have to down on this but like I said the focus is always been to find the aeroplane and the focus is to narrow the area of search and possible rescue.

Q : You're mentioned does need the pinger locator hydrophone. Can you elaborate further on this item and how it can help in the search.

A : That is got a direct, I have to very be careful here, not to alarm the family members. But the pinger locator hydrophone relays to us locating the black box. And that was (not clear) the French team very limited countries that got capability and I have been talking to leaders of these countries for the possibility of using or being given the chance or the opportunity to use them.

Q : Bagaimana dengan penelitian imej satelit yang didapati di barat daya Perth tu, tarikh yang didapati dan juga ada tak maklumat radar di kawasan Lautan Hindi telah didapati berkenaan dengan objek yang ditemui tersebut. Dan satu lagi persoalannya kepada MAS atau DCA, adakah pesawat Boeing kita dilengkapi dengan sistem yang dipanggil sebagai Boeing Uninterruptible Autopilot yang boleh menghalang sebarang tindakan hijack dari dalam secara manual melainkan kalau benda ini berlaku hanya boleh dilakukan secara remote control oleh military.

A : (HH) Sebelum saya serah kepada Datuk Azhar kepada kaca mata saya sebagai seorang yang tidak dilatih, it looks like a..... (not clear) in the ocean but I suppose there was experts out there who can differentiate one spec from the ocean from the others. I'm talking as a (not clear).

(AR) Kita diberitahu oleh pihak Australia yang mereka dalam imaging satellite yang mereka dapati ada mengandungi perkara atau pun objek yang credible lead datangnya daripada pesawat tersebut dan mereka terus menghantar kapal terbang P-3 Orion untuk melihat, untuk mencari objek tersebut dan sehingga hari ini kita dapat dengan positif mencari objek tersebut dan mestilah ada analisisnya sebelum mereka memgumumkan bahawa objek tersebut is a credible lead.

(HH) Saya nak mengesahkan pada kenyataan saya tadi bahawa empat pesawat telah pun kita deploy kepada 2,500 kilometer daripada Perth dan pesawat-pesawat ini merupakan pesawat yang paling sophisticated dan itulah yang kita gunakan termasuk maklumat-maklumat lain berhubung kait dengan P-8 Poseidon and

also the merchant ship that has responded the shipping broadcast issued by the RCC Australia on Monday.

(JY) The aircraft is equipped standard. Nothing additional we have (not clear).

A : Saya hendak mengesahkan daripada kenyataan saya tadi, bahawa 4 pesawat telah pun kita deploy kepada 2,500 km daripada Perth. Dan pesawat-pesawat ini merupakan pesawat yang paling sophisticated dan itulah yang kita gunakan tak termasuk maklumat-maklumat lain berhubung kait dengan the P-8 Poseidon and also the merchant ship that has responded to the shipping broadcast issue by RCC Australia on Monday.

A : (MAS) Soalan kedua: The aircraft is equipped as standard. Mengenai auto pilot? Nothing additional there...(not clear)

Q : Assalamualaikum Datuk Seri, saya Suhaila dari Berita Harian. Betulkah Malaysia ada buka pusat operasi mencari dan menyelamat di Kazakhstan?

A : Tadi saya dah maklumkan berhubung kait dengan status Kazakhstan di mana Kazakhstan telah mengesahkan setakat ini mereka tidak mempunyai apa-apa maklumat bahawa pesawat berkenaan telah mendarat di sana. Tetapi kita masih mengunggu maklumat sama ada Kazakhstan dibenarkan sebagai staging point ayat yang digunakan tadi.

Q : Datuk Seri, Elizabeth dari the Malaysian Insider. There's not much being said about the status of police investigations into the pilot and the co-pilot for the past few days since you know. So, can you please?

A : Yes, I can confirm that the discussions with some of the Intelligence Agency, they have come back to me that have not found anything unusual from the manifest. They have looked at the passengers' manifests earlier but we have requested that they relook at the list and this is my own personal information that I received from the Intelligence Agencies. As far as the simulator is concerned, we have forwarded the information in there to the international parties to verify and then I believe in the short period of time, the IGP might be able to come to inform you the latest development on that.

Q : Zurin from The Star. A lady has claimed that she saw something like what could be MH370 while flying back from Mekah. She lodged two police reports and apparently nothing was done about it, is that so?

A : I don't have information about that particular sighting. But I've always said that one lead where possible, we will follow up. But at the moment, the most credible lead we have is from the satellite images. Obviously, all our efforts in the last few days have been to verify and corroborate that information.

Q : Are there any strong leads at all? Anything significant? Is there any idea what happened?

A : No.

Q : I'm from Bloomberg. Minister, what conclusion have you drawn from the INMARSAT data that you received? And also from your analysis of the cockpit voice transmissions and the crew and the passengers I mean the flight simulator. Are there any conclusions either way you've drawn or any evidence of a struggle or anyone speaking on the duress in the cockpit?

A : (DCA) Your question on the INMARSAT, The INMARSAT information we received on Wednesday 13/03/2014, we corroborated with our investigation team from the US and in the end of the day, we analyzed it and we came out with the 2 corridors, the Northern Corridor and the Southern Corridor. And from what we have gathered from the communication with the pilot ATC. We have not come to any conclusion because we have to get more information from the aircraft itself. I don't want to go.....very sensitive to the next of kin but our aim now is to find the aircraft.

Q : How much smaller are the chances of finding.....that's part of the west coast of Australia as everyday just passed? Given the fact that the currents in that region and the fact that And when you took the INMARSAT data, what did you mean by it needed further refinement? Can you clarify?

A : Let me just answer about the search. The Southern Corridor has always been a challenge. And I have to thank the Australian authority and also expertise from the US like I said I will be seeking further assistance from the Secretary of Defence US tonight. In the event that we do not find the debris in the near future, we have to, I will reveal and inform the media what are our plans in the southern corridor. But let me just stress that the most sophisticated planes, aircraft and vessels are heading in that direction. Some have actually covered the area. We're talking about the P3-Orion, We're talking about P-8 Poseidon, there are only two in this world. And US has given us permission and deployed that in that area. So, yes, it is a challenge but we're using every possible assets and equipment available to the world out there to locate the aircraft.

A : (DCA) Upon receiving the new data, the Malaysian authorities immediately discussed this with the US team and how the information may be used. So the US team and the investigation team of Malaysia then sent the data to the US and further processing was needed before it could be used. So, the initial result came back to us on Thursday, 13/03 at 1:30 in the afternoon and was agreed by the Malaysian team and US team that further refinement need to be done so the data again was sent to the US. I don't want to go to details about it but the end details of it. We came out with the two corridors, the Northern and the Southern corridors. The INMARSAT data also was used by the aircraft accident. Investigation Board of UK and they also did an analysis on it. When AAIB came to Malaysia on Friday, 14/03/2014 we compare the Malaysia team effort with the AAIB and the end result of the analysis connect with each other.

Q : I want to ask 2 things. Could we see the cargo list please at some stage. And also there are reports that there are lithium ion batteries that were in the cargo hole. Is that true? And given that there are notoriously unstable, could that have any impact on the aircraft?

A : The cargo manifest list is obviously with the investigation team. We carry some lithium ion small batteries, not big batteries. They are basically approved under the dangerous goods. Its not dangerous per say, but in terms of thethey are declared as dangerous goods in the log so it's being packed as recommended byWe checked them several times, make sure the packing is right, they are done according to the guidelines. Airlines do this at all time, it's not just Malaysian Airlines. These goods have been flown by

many airline cargo anyway. It's with the investigation team, you can check with them.

Q : You talk about the long hold, suggesting that it's going to be a long ordeal which I think you've suggested before. You've also talked about having frank discussions with the family members. Now I don't expect anyone to tell family members as to give up hope, you would never do that. But at the same time when you have frank discussions, do you present realistic scenarios to the family members which obviously they may not want to hear. And difficult it is for you to be frank with family members about the chances of their loved ones being alive today.

A : It is very,very difficult because the one question that really want to know is the answer to which we do not have. Which is "where are their loved ones" and "where is the aeroplane".

Q : I have a question, regarding the person who said "all right, good night". On Monday Conference, you said the initial investigation indicated it was the co-pilot. So my question is now who do you think it was?

A : This is obviously a part of the investigation. Like I said this is just the initial when we listen to the recording, we suspect it was the co-pilot who made the last call. I think let the investigation team does that.

Q : Yesterday, you mentioned Malaysia is lack of equipment or technology for deep water research, and are you going to require more countries to use it such as the China's new dragon one? Is that useful?

A :Yes, China is fully aware of our requirements. Both at the moment and possibility of deep sea search and rescue. The idea of PING locator is one asset which is immediately required to identify where the black box is, within the 30-day period. But to do that, we need to narrow the areas of search, so we are focusing on the credible information that was given to us by the Australians who are leading that quadron. If we can narrow that then we will be in a better and stronger position to know what sort of equipment that we need but I can assure you that the Chinese authorities are more than willing and have been cooperative.

Q : One of the difficulties with the search is the plane can only spend two hours to be back from the regiment. Why hasn't the Pentagon not send any refueling tankers so the plane can spend longer time in the area? Are you going to ask Secretary Hagel tonight?

A : After your question, I probably would. The operational (not clear), I don't discuss at the level of Secretary Hagel. Now that you've listed it, I will probably talk about it tonight.

Q : Can you give some more details about basing in Kazakhstan. Can you give us an idea what will be base there, what facilities they will have and is that mean your shifting focus on the North corridor?

(someone else repeated the question) What he's saying is you talked about Kazakhstan in your statement. Does it mean in the sense you are turning your focus and attention to the North corridor?

A : No. It just shows that we are concentrating on both corridors and relation to Kazakhstan, they are no news or confirmation that the airplane was in their air space. And we are waiting reply from them whether as we can use Kazakhstan as a staging point and until and unless they confirm that, I won't be in position to say more.

Q : There's a report the pilot made a phone call from the cockpit just before the flight. Could somebody comment on what that phone call was if you has any evidence of that. The second thing is you keep talking 1 thing to narrow the search corridor but you clearly not been able to do that so far. So you could bit more specific about some of the challenge that you are facing in narrowing the search corridors. What more can Malaysia, what more can your partners do to help to narrow the search corridor?

A : The search now is taken a global perspective. I don't think any bigger search and rescue operation being done right now. To have the US, the Chinese, the Japanese, all working together with all the sophisticated equipment and Malaysia is only just coordinating country, because it being impossible to have such sophisticated equipment within our armory. But the fact that their support has been overwhelming, that is what I mean but what the most sophisticated

equipment out there in the world, and as a global community cannot narrow it, I do not know who else can. So, basically we have the the Poseidon, the P-3, satellite images it focus at some area, that is what I mean by on the operational side the narrowing of the corridor and especially the Southern corridor as you can see the challenges, the depth of the sea, the weather and the waves. If we did not find it within 30 days, it will be se as other issues of how to locate as the French Airlines took 2 years to find it and that come into different realm of search and rescue.

(JY) As far as we concern, we are passing this information to the investigation authorities and they will investigate for us.

Session Ends

