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Petronas-France

PETRONAS NOT OBLIGED TO COMPLY, SAYS FRENCH DIPLOMAT

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 11 (Bernama) -- Petronas is not obliged to comply with a request from the United States that its official investigate its business dealings with Iran, French Ambassador to Malaysia Eduard Braine said today.

"If he comes here, just welcome him as a friend, but Petronas does not have to comply by giving information which the US needs," he told reporters here today.

Braine was asked to comment on a news report that an American official will arrive here on Nov 18 to investigate a Petronas deal with Iran over the development of a gas field there.

Petronas of Malaysia, Gazprom of Russia and Total of France have signed a US\$2 billion (RM6.6 billion) joint-venture deal with Iran to develop part of the giant South Pars gas field.

The US investigation comes under the controversial Iran-Libya Sanctions Act 1996 which allows the US government to take action against any company that invests more than US\$20 million a year in the oil and gas sector in Iran and Libya.

"As a friend of Malaysia, we consider that the American law can only be applied in the US. Likewise in Malaysia only the Malaysian laws and in France only the French laws" he said.

He said if it were on international matters, it must be based on international law agreed by all countries or as ordered by the United Nations.

"We are completely on the same line with our Malaysian friends on this," Braine said of the impending US probe on Petronas.

He said French President Jacques Chirac would stress the French government's stand on the issue to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Langkawi next week.

Chirac is due to arrive in Langkawi on Sunday for a two-day visit.

--BERNAMA

MT AAM