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Pas, DAP support PM on isle issue

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KOTA BARU, Fri. - Pas supports Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's stand that a confrontation with Singapore in the dispute over Pulau Batu Puteh should be avoided.

Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat said the problem should be solved through proper channels.

"There is no need for a confrontation. A war will not settle the problem and it will lead to continuous vengeance," he said at his official residence today.

He was commenting on Dr Mahathir's statement that Malaysia would not follow the island republic's example by deploying armed forces personnel and warships to keep watch over Pulau Batu Puteh as it would lead to a confrontation.

"The island was under Malaya long before Singapore left Malaysia. And since Malaya has become Malaysia then it should be under Malaysia," he said.

In Kuala Lumpur, DAP deputy chairman Karpal Singh said that the Singapore Government needed legal advice, including from Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew, on the procedures relating to the disputed claim.

He said Lee, who trained as a lawyer, and Singapore's Attorney-General, could offer advice on how the republic should handle the dispute after it had been referred to the International Court of Justice.

Singapore, he said, should not be allowed to take the law into its hands while the case was still pending.

"If it (Singapore) has a legitimate claim, it should prove it in a proper forum, which is the ICJ," he said in a statement today.

He also said that it was imperative for Malaysia to insist on Singapore's withdrawal from Pulau Batu Puteh and immediate cessation of construction works on the island pending the ICJ's decision over the overlapping claims.

The DAP's deputy national publicity bureau chairman Ronnie Liu told a Press conference in Petaling Jaya today that Singapore should stop constructing new structures on the island until the ICJ had resolved the dispute. "The dispute should be allowed to be resolved professionally and the Malaysian and Singapore Governments cannot take actions which can create tension between them," he said.

He also urged the Malaysian Government not to overreact to Singapore's aggressive acts in handling the dispute.