

Dr M: Najib's China deals may threaten Malaysia's sovereignty

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Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad has warned that several deals being inked by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak with China may end up threatening Malaysia's sovereignty.

This, he said, includes Malaysia's territorial claim in the South China Sea which is also being claimed by China.

In particular, Mahathir expressed concern at the country's loan of RM55 billion from China to construct the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL).

"We already have a big debt, now we are going to owe such a large sum from a single source. It will have an impact on the country's politics.

"Last time, we were free to have relations with any countries. We were not tied down by agreements with any blocs in the country.

"This freedom is also be affected if we are going to owe such a large sum from any one country," he told a press conference in Putrajaya today.

Mahathir said this also sent the wrong signal to China on the dispute in the South China Sea.

"It appears as if we are changing our approach to South China Sea, that we are willing to give up our claims," said the Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (Bersatu) chairperson.

He added that awarding the ECRL project to China will lead to an outflow of funds.

"This is not a very wise way of managing the finances of the country," he said.

Meanwhile, Bersatu president Muhyiddin Yassin claimed that the Malaysia flag in the disputed areas had been removed.

"This compromises our right simply because we need help from a foreign country.

"It is not just about business but also a matter of our sovereignty," he said.

He added that Malaysia's Exclusive Economic Zone, fishing zone and natural resources in the disputed waters were also at stake.

Meanwhile, PKR communications director Fahmi Fadzil warned that Putrajaya's move to grant strategic projects in the country to China will have an impact on Malaysia's non-aligned stance.

This, he said, was on top of having to deal with China's Nine Dash Line policy in which the superpower is claiming almost the entire South China Sea.

"Many are asking, where is Umno when the country's strategic assets like the power plants owned by 1MDB through Edra Energy was wholly sold to China through China General Nuclear Power Corp?

"Where was Umno when a Chinese diplomat made a political comment - as reported in *Sin Chew Daily* - that gave the perception that there may be political interference in the country?" he said.

He said Umno should stop putting on a show and instead focus on the issues that mattered.

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