

PETROLEUM INTERESTS IN SOUTH CHINA SEA

ANWAR: PETRONAS OIL EXPLORATION WILL CONTINUE

PM denies he is compromising sovereignty and giving in to China's territorial claims

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim denies the opposition's claim that he had compromised Malaysia's petroleum interests in the South China Sea by stating a willingness to negotiate with China.

He said the government was consistent in saying that Petrol Nasional Bhd (Petronas) would continue its oil exploration in South China Sea waters belonging to Malaysia.

"The project will continue. Petronas' oil exploration in areas believed to be ours will not be affected. I am consistent in saying that this will continue, and this is our territory.

"But if China says no, and there is an overlap, then we will discuss. If we don't discuss, what should we do? Go to war?"

Anwar said this at the launch of the "Kita-Untuk-Kita" programme at the Kampung Baru Hicom People's Housing Project here yesterday.

Oh Friday, Perikatan Nasional chairman Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin had slammed Anwar's readiness to negotiate with China



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim (back row, fifth from right) posing with participants after the launch of the 'Kita-Untuk-Kita' programme at the Kampung Baru Hicom People's Housing Project in Shah Alam yesterday. PIC BY EIZAIRI SHAMSUDIN

on Petronas' oil exploration in the waters.

He said Anwar's statement had undermined the country's sovereignty.

In a statement on Facebook, the Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia president also described Anwar's statement as weak and irresponsible, adding that it was tantamount to surrendering Malaysia's dignity and sovereignty to a foreign power.

In response, Anwar claimed that Muhyiddin did not read his statement and reiterated that the oil exploration project by Petronas would continue.

"Petronas' oil exploration project will continue. Period. I did not at all say that I wanted to compromise.

"I've said all this to the leadership of China, which he (Muhyiddin) did not do.

"These opposition members do

not attend Parliament and do not listen to our views, read our statements and explanations."

Anwar had said in Parliament on Tuesday Malaysia was ready to negotiate if China felt that the said area (of exploration) was their territory.

He said the matter was raised with Chinese President Xi Jinping and his counterpart Li Qiang during his visit to the country recently.