

Press Release**We Really Need a Caliphate to Protect the South China Sea**

The South China Sea dispute has resurfaced following the leak of a diplomatic note from the People's Republic of China (PRC) to the Malaysian Embassy in Beijing, dated February 18. The note disclosed China's objection and its demand that Malaysia cease oil and gas exploration activities in Beting Raja Jarum and Beting Patinggi Ali, areas within the Spratly Islands. An article related to this note was published by a Philippine media outlet on August 29. Shortly after, on September 7, a Chinese military and coast guard vessel was observed operating within Malaysia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) near Sarawak. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while confirming its awareness of the situation, refrained from offering further comments.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim recently expressed his willingness to engage in negotiations with China regarding the ongoing territorial dispute over the South China Sea. This stance represents a shift from Malaysia's long-standing position, which rejects China's claims in the region. The countries involved in the dispute - Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Brunei - all have overlapping EEZ and continental shelf claims. Despite China's "warning", the Malaysian government has reaffirmed its commitment to continuing oil and gas exploration in the disputed area, while also emphasizing its dedication to resolving disputes through peaceful means, utilizing consultation and dialogue within existing diplomatic frameworks to avoid conflict. The recurring presence of Chinese warships in the South China Sea, particularly within Malaysia's EEZ, has not elicited a significant response from Malaysia. China appears to perceive Malaysia as a relatively small and vulnerable country, and as a result, it is unsurprising that China occasionally intrudes into Malaysian waters, even going so far as to issue warnings regarding Malaysia's activities in its own EEZ, which China claims.

The response of the Malaysian Prime Minister in this issue is perplexing. Anwar Ibrahim seeks to negotiate with a party intent on encroaching upon Malaysia's territory! How can one justify negotiating with the party that has no legitimate claim, especially when it is actively undermining our sovereign rights? This approach seems to reflect Anwar's stance on territorial sovereignty, echoing his position on the two-state solution for Palestine - negotiating with an aggressor and conceding significant portions of our rights. Anwar's readiness to engage in negotiations with China not only underscores Malaysia's weakness but also provides China with an opportunity to assert its claims over Malaysian waters. This display of vulnerability could lead to the concession of Malaysia's territorial waters as a result of these negotiations. Anwar has attempted to justify his stance by posing the question, "Do we want war (with China) instead of negotiations?" This statement stands in stark contrast to his remarks during the recent Independence Day celebration, where he criticized past leadership for the loss of Batu

Puteh Island to Singapore. Anwar strongly emphasized the importance of defending every inch of our territory against foreign encroachment, declaring that many nations have gone to war to safeguard their rights. The pressing question now is: what is Anwar's approach with China?

Anwar seems to be underscoring "the threat of war" from China, despite the lack of any official statements from China to that effect. His rationale appears to follow the principle of choosing the "lesser of two evils" - avoiding greater harm by accepting a lesser one. Through this reasoning, he may be attempting to prepare Malaysians for the eventual acceptance of ceding some of Malaysia's territorial waters to China. If aggressors continually infringe upon our rights, and we respond by offering negotiations, this not only signals a surrender of territory but also reflects a loss of dignity and strength. In such a scenario, the very existence of our armed forces becomes questionable, as any act of aggression would merely be met with negotiation!

It is true that China possesses significant power, allowing it to act with impunity in the South China Sea, often disregarding the rights of its neighboring countries. However, China's dominance is not solely a result of its strength but also due to the weakness and betrayal of Muslim rulers. The Muslim Ummah is inherently strong, with a formidable and courageous military. Yet, a group of lions certainly cannot rise if led by a dog! Since the fall of the Caliphate over a century ago, the Ummah has been without a Caliph, whom the Prophet Muhammad (saw) described as a shield behind which the Ummah fights and is protected. As a result, Muslim lands have been vulnerable to enemy encroachment.

During the reign of the Caliphate, it was evident that its military power enabled it to dominate much of the world's seas and key maritime routes. Non-Muslim states refrained from challenging the authority of the Caliphate. The establishment of a Muslim navy dates back to the time of the Righteous Caliphs. Under the Umayyads, the Caliphate dismantled the Roman navy's supremacy, making Muslims the preeminent naval force globally. This dominance extended from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean. This legacy was carried forward by the Abbasid and Ottoman Caliphates, who controlled trade routes linking the East and West, compelling European merchants to traverse Islamic lands to reach India and China.

Malaysia will remain small and weak as long as it confines itself to the nation-state framework and is ruled by leaders lacking the ambition to elevate Islam globally. The same applies to the Muslim Ummah, which will never regain its status as the strongest and most exemplary nation so long as it is led by cowardly and corrupt leaders. The only path to reclaiming our position as a global superpower and safeguarding our lands and waters lies in the re-establishment of the Righteous Caliphate upon the Method of Prophethood (al-Khilafah ar-Rashidah ala Minhaj Nubuwwah). With its strength and by Allah's will, the Caliphate will achieve successive victories, dominating both East and West with Islam, thereby spreading His (swt) Mercy as He (swt) has promised.

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