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MAHATHIR-MESSAGE

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KUALA LUMPUR, OCT 24 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY MALAYSIA'S FAITH IN THE UNITED NATIONS, DESPITE ITS IMPERFECTIONS, HAS BEEN UNFLINCHING.

UNFORTUNATELY, SOME OF THE ORIGINAL ARCHITECTS OF THE WORLD BODY WERE NOW CHALLENGING THE VERY BASIS OF WHAT THE FORUM STOOD FOR, HE SAID IN A MESSAGE TO UN PRESIDENT JAIME DE PINIES IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UN TODAY.

+CRITICISMS HEAPED ON THE UN BY THE RICH AND THE POWERFUL CONFIRM THEIR INTENTION OF PERPETUATING THE UN IN THEIR OWN IMAGE,+ HE SAID.

+THE 1945 VISION OF THE UN, HOWEVER LAUDABLE, WAS A PRODUCT OF A CLOSE CIRCLE OF COUNTRIES HAVING HAD THEIR CONSCIENCE PRICKED DUE TO THE HOLOCAUST OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR,+ HE SAID.

THE UN HAD EXPANDED TO 159 MEMBER STATES WITH AN AFRO-ASIAN MAJORITY AND WAS CONTINUOUSLY WORKING IN PURSUIT OF A PEACEFUL EVOLUTION TOWARDS A MORE JUST AND SECURE WORLD ORDER, THE PRIME MINISTER ADDED. -- MORE

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HE SAID THE POWERFUL COUNTRIES MUST ACCEPT THIS PRESENT PREDISPOSITION OF THE UN, WHICH WAS NOW NO LONGER AN EXCLUSIVE FORUM FOR THE SUPERPOWERS TO PERPETUATE THEIR INTERESTS.

+THE PRACTICE OF COERCION, BOTH FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL, DIRECT OR INDIRECT, BY THE POWERFUL ON SMALLER STATES IS UNHEALTHY AND HAS TO BE CHECKED. WE MUST NOT ALLOW THE UN TO BE UTILISED BY THE SUPERPOWERS TO INTENSIFY THEIR SQUABBLES,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THE UN MUST REMAIN A FORUM FOR MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY WHERE CONCILIATION AND COOPERATION SHOULD PREVAIL OVER CONFRONTATION.

THE UN'S INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTION IN CHAMPIONING THE PLIGHT OF THE OPRESSED, THE POOR AND THE DISPLACED DESERVED CREDIT, HE SAID.

HOWEVER, POLITICAL PRESSURES BY THE RICH AND POWERFUL HAD PUT SERIOUS BRAKES ON THESE EFFORTS, DEPRIVING THE MAJORITY OF THE MEMBER STATES WHAT THEY NEEDED MOST, HE ADDED. -- BERNAMA

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