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MAHATHIR-JAPAN

EMBARGO: FOR RELEASE AT 10.30 TONIGHT

KUALA LUMPUR, MAY 2 (BERNAMA) -- MALAYSIA HOPES THAT JAPAN WILL HELP TO DISPEL THE *FORTRESS MENTALITY+ NOW SPREADING AMONG THE RICH COUNTRIES AND PREVENT THE WORLD FROM BEING BROKEN UP INTO COMPETING ECONOMIC BLOCS, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TONIGHT.

MALAYSIA, HE SAID, WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE +FORTRESS MENTALITY+ DESPITE ASSURANCES THAT THE ECONOMIC UNIONS OF THE RICH WERE NOT INTENDED TO KEEP OUT EXPORTS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

+BUT THEN, WE REMEMBER HOW TARIFF BARRIERS WERE ERECTED WHEN OUR TRADING PARTNERS JOINED SUCH ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES,+ HE SAID AT A DINNER HELD AT SRI PERDANA HERE IN HONOUR OF VISITING JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER NOBORU TAKESHITA.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MALAYSIA HAD NOTICED THAT JAPAN WAS MAKING ADJUSTMENTS IN ANTICIPATION OF PROTECTIONIST POLICIES BY ECONOMIC BLOCS.

HOWEVER, DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WERE UNABLE TO MAKE SUCH ADJUSTMENTS, HE SAID, ADDING THAT JAPAN MUST HELP TO ENSURE A MORE JUST AND EQUITABLE WORLD,

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID ENCIK TAKESHITA'S TWO-DAY VISIT WAS TIMELY BECAUSE IT MARKED A +NEW MOOD+ IN JAPAN'S RELATIONS WITH MALAYSIA AND ASEAN.

ENCIK TAKESHITA'S VISIT DEMONSTRATED THE +IMPORTANCE+ THAT JAPAN ATTACHED TO MALAYSIA AND ASEAN, AS WELL AS A DESIRE TO HOLD CONSULTATIONS WITH THESE COUNTRIES.

HE SAID HE WAS GLAD THAT JAPAN-MALAYSIA RELATIONS HAD CONTINUED TO DEVELOP POSITIVELY SINCE THE LAST VISIT OF A JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER TO MALAYSIA IN 1983,

+MALAYSIA HIGHLY VALUES THE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION WHICH HAS BEEN MADE BY BOTH THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR TOWARDS STRENGTHENING OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS,+ HE SAID.

HOWEVER, THERE WAS STILL ROOM FOR ENHANCING BILATERAL COOPERATION PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELDS OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND THE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY, HE ADDED. -- MORE

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ON THE **+LOOK EAST+ POLICY**, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MALAYSIA WAS PROUD OF ITS SUCCESS SINCE ITS LAUNCHING EIGHT YEARS AGO, AND IT HAD ENJOYED THE SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF JAPAN.

THE POSITIVE **RESULTS** AND SUCCESSES WHICH HAD BEEN ACHIEVED UNDER THE POLICY WOULD JUSTIFY AN EXPANSION OF THE PROGRAMME TO INCLUDE FIELDS SUCH AS AGRICULTURE AND **TOURISM**, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MALAYSIA HOPED JAPAN WOULD **+LOOK SOUTH+** IN THE CONTEXT OF TOURISM AND INVESTMENT. HE SAID MALAYSIA UNDERSTOOD JAPAN'S NEED TO INVEST IN EUROPE AND AMERICA, AND THE DESIRE OF JAPANESE TOURISTS TO GO THERE.

BUT, HE ADDED, SOUTHEAST ASIA HAD ALWAYS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART IN JAPAN'S ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT. **+A PROSPEROUS SOUTHEAST ASIA WLL ALWAYS BE AN ASSET TO JAPAN,+** HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO SAID THAT **JAPAN**, AS A MAJOR REGIONAL AND WORLD ECONOMIC **POWER**, COULD ASSIST AND PROMOTE THE OVERALL GROWTH OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC **REGION**, PARTICULARLY **SINCE THE 21ST CENTURY** HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS THE **+ASIA PACIFIC CENTURY.+** -- MORE
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MALAYSIA, HE SAID, WELCOMED JAPAN'S PLANS TO OPEN ITS MARKETS ^{TO} IMPORTS FROM COUNTRIES IN THE **REGION**, AND ASSISTANCE SUCH AS PROVIDING **FUNDS**, EXPERTISE AND OTHER RESOURCES.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO SAID MALAYSIA VIEWED THE RECENT AGREEMENTS REACHED IN GENEVA AS BEING MOMENTOUS AND FULL OF ^{JAPAN} OPPORTUNITIES. HE SAID MALAYSIA VALUED THE OPEN-HANDEDNESS OF ^{AL} IN PROVIDING FACILITIES AND PRIORITY FOR AGRICULTURAL AND TROPIC GOODS.

MALAYSIA ALSO HOPED THAT JAPAN WOULD CONSIDER IMPORTING MORE MANUFACTURED **GOODS**, HE ADDED. -- BERNAMA
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