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U E236 AAE ENG MES
. HAHATHIR-FORCES

KUALA LUMPUR, D E C . 2 (BERNAMA)-- THE COUNTRY'S DEFENCE SPENDING AND THE ROLE OF THE ARMED FORCES WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE REDUCED FOLLOWING THE CESSATION OF ARMED GUERRILLA INSURGENCY BY THE OUTLAWED COMMUNIST PARTY OF MALAYA (CPM), DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

THE ARMED FORCES WOULD INSTEAD BE DIRECTED TO CONCENTRATE MORE ON ENSURING THE SAFETY OF THE COUNTRY'S LAND AND SEA AREAS, ESPECIALLY THE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE (EEZ), THE PRIME MINISTER SAID.

THE ARMED FORCES WOULD ALSO BE DIRECTED TO PUT MORE EFFORTS INTO PREPARING THEMSELVES AS AN EFFECTIVE CONVENTIONAL FORCE WHILE AT THE SAHE TIME MAINTAINING ITS EFFECTIVENESS IN GUERRILLA WARFARE, HE TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER CHAIRING THE UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL HEETING HERE.

+SUCH NEW RESPONSIBILITIES WOULD NOT NECESSARILY REDUCE OUR DEFENCE SPENDING AS SOME NEW EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS WOULD HAVE TO BE ACQUIRED FOR THE NEW ROLES,+ DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID.

HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO, HOWEVER, UNDERTAKE A THOROUGH STUDY SO AS TO MINIMISE THE MILITARY SPENDING FOR THE NEW ROLES.

THE CPM, WHICH HAS BEEN CARRYING OUT ARMED STRUGGLE SINCE THE DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY IN 1948, WILL CEASE THEIR ARMED INSURGENCY FOLLOWING TODAY'S SIGNING OF A PEACE ACCORD WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA IN HAADYAI, SOUTH THAILAND.-- BERNAMA
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