

D157

R E966 AAE
MAHATHIR - WEAPONS

KUALA LUMPUR, MARCH 20⁹⁰ (BERNAMA) -- MALAYSIA HAS ALREADY DECIDED ON THE KIND OF WEAPONS IT NEEDS AND HOW MUCH IT CAN AFFORD TO SPEND ON SUCH WEAPONS, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY. (P)

BUT MALAYSIA'S DEFENCE NEEDS ARE RELATIVELY SIMPLE AND MODEST, HE SAID WHEN OPENING THE SECOND DEFENCE SERVICES ASIA EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE (DSA), ASIA'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS DEFENCE SHOW AND CONFERENCE, AT THE PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE HERE.

HE SAID SINCE 1948, A FAIR PERCENTAGE OF THE NATIONAL BUDGET HAD TO BE EXPANDED TO COUNTER COMMUNIST TERRORIST ACTIVITIES, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS A WAR WHICH DID NOT CALL FOR SOPHISTICATED AND EXPENSIVE WEAPONRY BECAUSE THE MAIN NEED WAS SKILL IN ANTI-GUERRILLA WARFARE.

+NOW THAT THE GUERRILLA WAR IS OVER, WE ARE NOT ABOUT TO FORGET OUR SKILLS IN THIS AREA. BUT WE DO REALISE THE NEED FOR SOME CONVENTIONAL WARFARE CAPABILITIES,+ HE SAID IN REFERENCE TO THE LAYING DOWN OF ARMS BY THE ARMED GUERRILLAS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF MALAYA (CPM) UNDER THE PEACE ACCORD SIGNED ON DEC 2 LAST YEAR.

MALAYSIA, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID, WAS ONE OF THE FEW COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD WHICH HAD BEEN ABLE TO DEFEAT COMMUNIST GUERRILLAS.--MORE

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THE PRIME MINISTER CALLED FOR RESEARCH AND ENERGY TO BE DIVERTED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF A WORLD WITHOUT A COLD WAR.

HE ALSO SAID WEAPONS AND SOPHISTICATED SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS WERE GOING TO BE MUCH IN DEMAND TO COMBAT SMUGGLING PARTICULARLY ON DRUGS,+ HE ADDED.

HE SAID IF THE SOPHISTICATED SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS COULD BE ADAPTED FOR COUNTER-SMUGGLING EFFORTS, THE MARKET FOR THIS SHOULD SUSTAIN THE ARMS INDUSTRY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID ALREADY AIRBORNE WARNING AND CONTROL SYSTEMS (AWACS) HAD FOUND A PLACE IN THIS FIELD IN THE UNITED STATES.

HE ALSO REITERATED THAT SOUTHEAST ASIA MUST BE KEPT FREE FROM SUPERPOWER CONFLICT AND RIVALRY TO ENABLE THE REGION'S DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS TO CONTINUE.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID ANY ATTEMPT OR ACTION AGAINST THE CONCEPT OF ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY (ZOPFAN) DESIRED BY THE REGION WOULD NOT HELP REALISE THIS OBJECTIVE BUT INSTEAD WOULD PROVIDE EXCUSES FOR OTHERS FROM OUTSIDE TO INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN THE REGION. --MORE

1455MST 20 03 90

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MALAYSIA, HE SAID, TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK FOR THE REALISATION OF ZOPFAN AND A NUCLEAR-FREE ZONE IN THE REGION.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID FOR MALAYSIA, DEFENCE PREPAREDNESS WAS NECESSARY TO ENSURE STABILITY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

+WE ARE NOT AN AGGRESIVE NATION, AND WE HAVE NO TERRITORIAL CLAIMS. LIKewise MALAYSIAN TERRITORY IS NOT FOR SALE TO ANYONE,+ HE SAID.

HOWEVER, THE PRIME MINISTER ADDED MALAYSIA ACCEPTED THE NEED TO DEFEND ITS SEAS AND TERRITORIES WITH ALL THE STRENGTH IT WAS CAPABLE OF.

+OUR MAIN DEFENCE REQUIREMENT IN THE PAST WAS TO COUNTER COMMUNIST INSURGENCIES,+ HE SAID AND ADDED, OVER THE YEARS OF THE EMERGENCY, MALAYSIAN SOLDIERS HAD ACQUIRED SKILLS WHICH WERE SECOND TO NONE IN ANTI-GUERRILLA JUNGLE WARFARE. --MORE
1526MST 20 03 90

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THE FOUR-DAY EXHIBITION IS BEING PARTICIPATED BY 230 EXHIBITORS FROM 28 COUNTRIES. THE EXHIBITION COVERS AN AREA OF 12,000 SQ METRES TAKING UP THREE LEVELS OF THE PWTC.

THE PRIME MINISTER LATER WITNESSED A FLYPAST BY TWO BRITISH-MADE TORNADO COMBAT AIRCRAFT OVER THE PWTC BEFORE VISITING THE EXHIBITION.

ALSO PRESENT AT THE OPENING CEREMONY WERE DEFENCE MINISTER TENGKU AHMAD RITHAUDDEEN AND HIS COUNTERPARTS GEN BENNY MURDANI OF INDONESIA, GEN FIDEL RAMOS OF THE PHILIPPINES AND SINGAPORE'S TRADE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER BRIG-GEN LEE HSIEN LOONG, WHO IS ALSO SECOND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE. -- BERNAMA
1527MST 20 03 90