

questions from newsmen over RTM's weekly *Current Affairs* programme tonight.

He said the NIC was a new title to be given to developing countries whose economic growth is impressive, and are poised to challenge the economic strength of industrialised nations.

Discrimination

"When a developing country is bestowed this title, developed countries will, among others, impose quota restrictions, appreciate the value of the affected country's currency, inspect human rights conventions and question labour rights and freedom.

"All these are done to reduce the aggressiveness and competitive edge of developing countries. With the political liberation of Eastern Europe, would the United States and Europe grant NIC status to these countries and restrict their growth?

"I don't think this is likely. Instead, they will be helping Eastern Europe economically. Why is there discrimination against East Asia? Japan managed to grow without restrictions because industrialised countries have not figured out a way of stopping it then.

"But today, these industrialised countries have decided that no other Asian country should be an economic powerhouse. The NIC is a creation to stop such a possibility in the future. I believe this is something we need to counter and we do this by exposing the real reasons for its creation."

He said rejecting the NIC title did not mean rejecting or slowing down efforts to industrialise.

He said the title would restrict economic growth and put developing countries at a disadvantage.

"Removing privileges under the Generalised System of Preferences, imposing quotas, appreciating the countries' currency and checking on their human rights track record are seemingly legitimate conditions which developing countries have to bear before gaining full industrialised status."

Dr M:

NIC

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status

just

a ploy

GRANTING developing countries the status of a newly industrialised country (NIC) is a ploy by developed nations to slow down the growth of the former, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad said.

"Being categorised as a NIC would automatically mean the close scrutiny by developed countries on the socio-economic performance of developing countries, he said.

As such, efforts by certain groups to categorise developing countries including Malaysia as a leading candidate for the NIC status should also be in its proper light.

"Seven developed nations get together and unilaterally decide that some developing nations should be re-classified and be known as NIC. Who gives these industrialised countries the right to determine at what level we should stop growing economically?"

"We are sovereign States, and we don't need others to tell us that we are not allowed to expand further. This is unfair because there has never been discussion or consultation on the criteria before a country could be granted NIC status."

The seven countries are the United States, Britain, Japan, France, Canada, West Germany and Italy. Dr Mahathir was responding to