

Li Peng: No plan to use Chinese

12 DEC 1990

By Nuraina Samad

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Chinese Premier Li Peng today gave an assurance that his country will not use the Chinese community in Southeast Asia to promote its own interests.

He gave the assurance during talks with Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Prime Minister's office here.

Foreign Ministry deputy secretary-general Datuk Abdul Majid Mohamad said this in a Press briefing after both leaders held two separate meetings.

Dr Mahathir and Mr Li met before proceeding to lead their delegations in talks which mainly focused on improving trade relations.

Mr Li arrived here yes-

terday with a 49-member delegation on a four-day official goodwill visit at the invitation of Dr Mahathir.

In talks, which both leaders described as frank, very useful and wide-ranging, Mr Li expressed the hope that Malaysians of Chinese origin would continue to be good citizens and contribute to the development of the country.

He said ethnic Chinese in the region who still had not acquired citizenship should respect the laws of the countries where they were residing.

Dr Mahathir had earlier told Mr Li that the Chinese community in Malaysia had contributed to the economic development and political process of the country.

He told his visiting coun-

terpart that the Malaysian Chinese were citizens with full rights.

Dr Mahathir also told Mr Li that Malaysia, in its efforts to further enhance ties with China, had eased travel restrictions to the republic.

He said this followed the end of military insurrec-

DIRECT TRADE PREFERRED: P2

tion by the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) against the Government.

Mr Li, reflecting on China's right previously to party-to-party support of the defunct MCP, said the relations between the MCP and the Chinese Communist Party should not have been an obstacle to establishing closer relations be-

tween the two countries.

He also said China was modernising its defence forces but gave an assurance that consonant with the republic's principle of peaceful co-existence, this would not be used to further its foreign policy objectives.

Mr Li also described as constructive the suggestion by Dr Mahathir that countries in East Asia co-operate closely in trade in the face of increasing protectionism by Western countries.

He said both countries could continue to explore and further discuss the proposal.

Dr Mahathir had spoken of the need for East Asian countries to have a united stand in international negotiations to ensure they

were strong.

The Chinese Premier also touched on the question of Malaysia's trade relations with Taiwan which he said China did not oppose.

Talks between the Chinese and Malaysian delegations centred on trade and international politics.

China and Malaysia expressed a similar stand on the Gulf crisis and the Cambodian conflict.

On Cambodia, it was agreed that the only problem was for the Supreme National Council to be inaugurated with Prince Sihanouk as chairman.

Both agreed that the Cambodian factions must show flexibility and a realistic approach towards resolving the problem.