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Mahathir - EAEG '''

(P)

KUALA LUMPUR, May 18 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in response to United States Vice-President Dan Quayle's assertion that any economic grouping that excludes the US would be +counter-productive+, pointed out today that the European Community is also without the US.

+The EC is also without the United States. If we like, we can have a world economic grouping,+ the Prime Minister said.

+A world economic grouping means no restriction on trade. We would like to have no restriction on trade.+

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was answering reporters' questions after bidding farewell to his Czech and Slovak Federal Republic counterpart, Dr Marian Calfa, at Carcosa Seri Negara, here. Dr Calfa who arrived yesterday later left for Pulau Pinang.

Asked whether Malaysia would consider US involvement in the Malaysia-proposed East Asia Economic Group (EAEG) following the US Vice-President's statement, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said it was not for him to decide.

+Asean would have to consider the statement,+ he said. -- more

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Mahathir-EAEG 2 Kuala Lumpur '''

In a briefing for Asian journalists prior to his fourth trip to Asia in Washington on Thursday, Vice-President Quayle, in reference to the EAEG, had said that an Asian economic grouping that excluded the United States would be +counter-productive+ and that the US did not welcome the idea of being excluded from participating in any kind of economic development talks.

Asked whether he thought Encik Quayle's statement was arrogant, the Prime Minister said: +I have no opinion.+

On reports quoting Encik Quayle as thanking several Asean leaders for rejecting the Malaysian proposal, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said as far he knew, all the Asean leaders supported the proposal.

+May be there are things I don't know+, he said. -- Bernama

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