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UNITED STATES IS OPPOSING FREE TRADE

Mahathir - EAEC'''

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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 7 (Bernama) -- (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir) said tonight the United States' action in asking Japan not to participate in the East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC) showed that it did not favour free trade.

The Prime Minister said he concluded from the US action that as a Superpower it need not have to seriously consider the views of others.

Expressing sadness and disappointment over the United States' attitude, the Prime Minister said he did not understand the rationale behind the US opposition to the EAEC despite his lengthy explanation to US Secretary of State James Baker.

The EAEC plan is harmless, it did pose any threat to anyone but is only aimed at protecting free trade which the United States had been supporting all this while, he said after chairing a meeting of the Umno Supreme Council here.

He said this when asked to comment on a Japanese newspaper report that Encik Bakar had formally requested Japan via a memorandum to the Japanese Foreign Ministry not to participate in the EAEC.

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♥07/11/23-24MST

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Mahathir - EAEC 2 Kuala Lumpur:

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he was most disappointed because it appeared that the United States did not appreciate Malaysia's support of the United States sponsored Security Council resolution on the Gulf War.

The Prime Minister said the EAEC plan would be pursued even if Japan decided not to participate.

Malaysia was thankful to Japan for its help in matters not opposed by the United States, he added.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is Umno President, said tonight's meeting of the party Supreme Council was a normal get together on the eve of the general assembly. -- more

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Mahathir - EAEC 3 Kuala Lumpur

He said there was no special matter to be discussed in this year's general assembly except for the debate on the presidential address and the resolution on the economy to be tabled by Umno Youth.

Some 1,700 people including observers from Sabah Umno and guests from Indonesia's Golkar party and Parti Kebangsaan Melayu Singapura would attend the assembly. -- Bernama

♥07/11/23-50MST