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NAM STILL RELEVANT AS COUNTER BALANCE TO SUPERPOWERS OF THE NORTH
Mahathir-NAM

(P) KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 3 (Bernama) -- The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is still relevant as an organisation to counter balance the superpowers of the North, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

By definition it might be irrelevant because it might not have any role to play with the end of the Cold War, he added.

But, he said, as a group to counter balance another group of countries NAM was relevant because the developed countries and the North had become too strong.

+The movement is still relevant... maybe, we need to change the definition or the role but we cannot say that it is irrelevant,+ he told reporters after chairing the Barisan Nasional Supreme Council meeting at the Umno headquarters here.

Dr Mahathir will be attending the six-day NAM Summit in Jakarta beginning on Sept 1. NAM groups just over 100 countries. -- more

▼03/08/18-03MST

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Mahathir-NAM 2 Kuala Lumpur

NAM, born out of the Asia-Africa conference held in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955, was launched in 1961 to clear the middle path in a world divided by blocs of communism and capitalism.

Dr Mahathir said if the non-aligned movement closed shop, that would leave the world with only one Super-super power and the developed countries of the north.

The clout they wielded had to be counter balanced with something which could be said to be similarly strong, he added.

Commenting on Myanmar's intention to resume membership in NAM, he said it had yet to be studied but, if that was so, there would have to be conditions.

There should be no standard approach to persuade countries to change their repressive policies, he said in response to calls by certain countries for sanctions to be imposed against Myanmar.

This was because the people of a particular country would suffer as they would have to bear the brunt of the sanctions, he added. -- more

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In the case of South Africa, Dr Mahathir said there was no other way to make the government there change its apartheid policies and the South Africans, especially the black community, had asked for the sanctions.

He added that the people of Myanmar had not asked for sanctions to be imposed against their government.

+They are already suffering and we do not see that this (sanctions) is a good or effective way (to persuade the Myanmar government),+ he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was against a proposal by certain powers to impose sanctions on Myanmar as such action would only block the return to the democratic process there.

He also said many other factors should be taken into account besides requests from the people themselves. These include whether it would be effective or otherwise.

Malaysia's approach to the Myanmar government was to persuade it by showing that the democratic system was better than a repressive one, he added. -- Bernama

▼03/08/18-15MST

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