

▼08/10/15-13MST

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MAHATHIR CALLS FOR MEETING ON STRAITS OF MELAKA

Mahathir - Straits 2

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 8 (Bernama)

Prime Minister ~~Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir~~
~~Mohamad said today the existing regulations govern~~ ~~ing the use of the~~
straits of Melaka are out-of-date and proposed a meeting among the littoral states for a possible revamp of the regulations.

He felt that the regulations should be, re-written to better protect the interests of Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and even Thailand in the wake of heavy traffic in the waterway.

+I think it is about time we meet and discuss the problem.. It is also about time to draw up new regulations regarding the use of the straits and other waterways affecting us,+ he told reporters after opening the four-day First Asean Congress organised by the Asean-Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) here.

+We are concerned, because there is almost a state of lawlessness in terms of the number of ships passing through the narrow straits,+ he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had to foot a huge bill, not because of its own fault but rightly that of others, to clean up the oil spill from the tanker Nagasaki Spirit, which collided with another ship in the straits. -- more

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Mahathir-Straits 2 Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said the proposed talks among the littoral states should not only be confined to the use of the Straits of, Melaka but other passageways affecting them.

+We have been told that we have no right to collect toll simply because the Straits of Melaka is an international waterway declared in the days when the maritime powers were elsewhere, + he said.

+The situation now has changed and the world cannot simply claim it is theirs but, not be prepared to pay for its maintenance,+ the Prime Minister said.

Some form of payment must be made to the authorities responsible for keeping the straits open and to reduce the dangers the shipping traffic posed, he added.

He said that was why Malaysia was proposing that new regulations be drawn up to protect the interests of the littoral states. -- more

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Mahathir-Straits 3 (last.) Kuala Lumpur

+What affects us affects others too and I think it is time-we meet and discuss this problem,+ he said. -- Bernama

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