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PLAY BIGGER ROLE ON WORLD SCENE, MAHATHIR URGES JAPAN

Mahathir - Japan

From Azman Ujang

Ⓟ Dr. M. - overseas trips.

TOKYO, Oct 19 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today appealed to Japan to use its position as an economic superpower to play a bigger and more crucial role on the world scene.

He said the world community, especially countries in South East Asia were looking towards mighty Japan today with rising expectations.

+Malaysia hopes that Japan will play a more crucial role in ensuring peace and security in addition to addressing the economic issues facing the world today, he said in a keynote address hosted by the Institute of Mitsui and Company for Trade and Economic Studies Incorporation here.

Over 300 top Japanese business leaders came to listen to the Prime Minister who spoke about the kind of influence he wants Japan to exert in world affairs in his address at the Imperial Hotel. The Institute is a research organisation of Mitsui, one of Japan's leading general trading companies.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had high regard for Japan's membership of the Group of Seven (G-7) developed countries and the consultation between the Japanese and Asian governments both prior to G-7 summit meetings and after such meetings, Japan is Asia's only member of the G-7. -- more

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+Japan must contribute significantly towards the creation of a stable political and fair economic order for the post Cold War era, the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir said in the shaping of a new international order, Asian countries would continue to look towards Japan, as a fellow Asian country, to exert its influence in addressing issues of great concern to Asians, whether politically or economically.

He told the Japanese businessmen, many of whom are chief executive officers of companies having operations in Malaysia, that because of this, it was very important for Japan to continue to forge more important economic relations, with its Asian neighbours.

+ We in South East Asia firmly expect Japan to play a leading role for the stability and development of the East Asian region. For this to happen, the mutual trust between Japan and East Asian countries should be enhanced, he added.

This would require regular dialogues among both sides so that when Japan engaged in policy coordination with other developed countries, it would be in a position to effectively present the concerns of and aspirations of the-developing East Asian countries; said Dr Mahathir In yet another call on Japan to join the proposed East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC). -- more.

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Mahathir - Japan 3 Tokyo

Japan is still undecided about whether to join the EAEC which Dr Mahathir proposed in 1990 as a consultative grouping on economic issues of South East Asian countries, together with Japan, China and South Korea but which is opposed by the United States.

Dr Mahathir also said that Malaysia was happy that Japan was now participating in the United Nations peace-keeping mission in Cambodia.

+We appreciate, Japan's rejection of war as a solution to international problems. But serving with the UN in order to restore peace is not the same as resorting to war,+ he said adding that force was sometimes necessary in order to stop violence..

For the first time since the end of the Second World War, the Japanese Parliament recently approved the sending of Japanese troops overseas for the Cambodian mission, despite widespread protests from the Japanese public.

Opposition to the despatch of Japanese troops abroad is regarded as one of the touchiest issues confronting Japan because its present generation still finds it difficult to overcome the hangover of war-time atrocities committed by Japan nearly 50 years ago when Japan occupied several countries in South East Asia. -- more

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Mahathir - Japan 4 Tokyo

He told the businessmen that with peace in Cambodia, there would be reconstruction and economic development in neighbouring Vietnam and Laos, and this would mean economic benefits for them.

+The Cambodians cannot resolve their problem by continuous civil war. It will destroy them completely. With outside help, peace and democracy may be achieved,+ he said.

He also spoke of the emergence of a more favourable political climate in this region, which would bring about greater economic growth and prosperity.

The rapprochement between the North and South Korea and between the Korea with China and Russia respectively are cause for optimism,+ he said.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir held discussions at his hotel suite with the president of Sato Kogyo Co Ltd T. Yoshitake and President of Daihatsu N. Kumagai.

Daihatsu is the Japanese partner bidding to start Malaysia's second national car project now still under negotiations. -- more

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Mahathir - Japan 5 (last) Tokyo

More CEOs of Japanese companies will be meeting the Prime Minister tomorrow, including from Mitsubishi Motor Corporation (MMC), the Japanese partner in Proton, which manufactures national car Proton Saga now into its seventh year of production.

Dr Mahathir and his wife Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali will be having lunch with an old friend of his, ex-Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasane tomorrow.

Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa will host a dinner for his Malaysian counterpart in the evening.

Dr Mahathir will leave for home on Wednesday. -- Bernama

▼19/10/14-10MST