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MAHATHIR: I HAVE NO AMBITION TO BE THIRD WORLD SPOKESMAN

Mahathir-spokesman

from Ahmad Zukirnan Zain (P)

JAKARTA, Sept 2 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir

Mohamad said he does not intend to be the spokesman of the Third World but ~~will continue~~ speaking up on the problems faced by the poor and developing nations.

+I have no ambition to be a spokesman of the Third World but I will keep on saying the things I believe are true, even if it hurts people,+ he told a packed press conference at the Jakarta Convention Centre here where he is attending the 10th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit.

When a reporter, describing Dr Mahathir as a young, angry leader of a young country, asked what his quarrel was with the world, particularly the West, he smiled and said:

+In the first place, I'm not so young. I'm 68 years old. I was born in December 1925...but I agree that my country is still very young.

+We're not quarrelling with anybody but we would like to speak the truth,+ said Dr Mahathir who had, among other things, deplored the West for its attitude towards saving the Bosnians from Serbian expansionism, in his address to the summit yesterday. -- more

▼02/09/20-46MST

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Mahathir-spokesman 2 Jakarta

He had also questioned the composition of the UN Security Council, saying victors of World War II could not be allowed to permanently affect the relative positions of the nations of the world.

+I would like to question anybody who can say what I stated yesterday was a lie...they were based on facts.

+I just say what is true. People will find the truth is not too painful for them.

+As much as when they say nasty things and sometime lies about us, we have to put up with them because we have no means of hitting back,+ he told the journalists.

Asked whether he agreed with suggestions that he was a +little Sukarno+, Dr Mahathir said he did not know why people should refer to him as the former Indonesian leader who was a founder of NAM. -- more

▼02/09/20-49MST

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Mahathir-spokesman 3 Jakarta

+I have no wish to be identified with the great Indonesian leader,+ he said, quipping that even in Malaysia he was just +little Mahathir+.

Dr Mahathir said he did not think his strong remarks against the West, particularly the United States, would affect NAM's chances of getting aid from the rich or even in bilateral relations with Malaysia.

+The United States is the fifth largest foreign investor in Malaysia,+ he said.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia was not out to influence NAM but merely playing its role as required of member countries.

+I don't think any particular group of countries can dominate the movement. We don't think we are here to shift the centre of gravity or to have an undue influence over the decisions,+ he said. -- more

▼02/09/20-53MST

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Mahathir-spokesman 4 (last) Jakarta

Dr Mahathir earlier had bilateral talks separately with Prime Ministers Begum Khaleda Zia of Bangladesh and Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan.

Both the leaders invited Dr Mahathir to visit their countries and exchanged views with him on NAM.

Zia requested Malaysia's expert assistance in the cultivation of oil palm, rubber and coconut and to take in more Bangladesh workers, said acting Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Datuk Abdul Halim Ali.

Dr Mahathir also met Bosnia-Herzegovina Foreign Minister Dr Haris Siladjic who requested monetary aid from Malaysia for the Bosnians to face the coming winter. -- Bernama

▼02/09/22-00MST