

PM: Others may make use of Apec



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JAKARTA: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed concern on the dominance of the United States over the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec).

He said Malaysia joined Apec despite its reservations because other Asean members had joined the group.

The Prime Minister added when the Apec proposal was initiated, Malaysia was not keen because it feared that the Asean members would become lost in Apec as there were many powerful countries.

"Since we like to go along with our Asean colleagues, we joined the group but we are still worried that Apec might not serve the purpose of this region.

"(Instead it) might be used by the powerful nations for their own progress," he told a press conference attended by about 300 journalists.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was disappointed with the stiff opposition from the United States to the East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC) but it would continue to push the idea.

He said Asean had been prevented from forming the EAEC to voice its

fears or take a common stand. "We are not allowed to, and we are not even a colony."

Asked whether Malaysia intend to remain in Apec, he replied: "For the moment, yes, unless there is evidence it is being used for other purposes."

Dr Mahathir said many countries were keen to form the EAEC until the intervention of former US Secretary of State James Baker.

Baker, who had strongly objected to the EAEC, had even made references to the role of the US in the Korean War to South Korea, he added.

Taking a swipe at Baker, Dr Mahathir said he

even "took exception to the Malay dress."

However, he said Malaysia had not given up the idea of forming the EAEC.

Dr Mahathir said the G15 group served as a good forum for North-South dialogue but other groups like NAM and Asean could have their own dialogues.

Dr Mahathir reiterated his call for a review in the composition of the United Nations Security Council.

He said countries which had contributed the most to the UN should be included as permanent members.

The membership of the security council was

based on the victors of the post World War Two but there were now some countries which had emerged as strong countries.

"We should continue to harp on it but it is not something that will happen overnight. We should push on," he said.

He said without the United Nations, things could worsen but the UN could be improved.

On Malaysia's relationship with the United States, Dr Mahathir said: "We are not against the US as a country. We are only against certain actions which we think are against certain principles and international law."