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REYNOLDS PRAISES MAHATHIR'S LEADERSHIP

-Reynolds-Mahathir

From Abdul Rahman Sulaiman

DUBLIN, Sept 23, (Bernama) -- Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds has praised Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's leadership which, he said, had transformed Malaysia from a mainly commodity-based economy into a substantial manufacturing centre.

He said: +You head the government of a country which has one of the most dynamic economies of the world.

+We hear talk of the "economic tigers" of Southeast Asia but the Malaysian economy has in recent years been expanding faster than any other economy in that fast-developing region, with growth averaging 9 per cent a year over the past five years.+

In his speech over dinner he hosted in honour of Dr Mahathir here last night, Reynolds said Malaysia's success had provided a basis for a major expansion in the trading relations between the two countries.

He noted that over the last five years, Irish exports of goods and services to Malaysia had increased by 300 per cent but the balance of trade had nevertheless remained generally in Malaysia's favour. -- more

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Reynolds-Mahathir 2 Dublin

He was confident that Dr Mahathir's visit here would serve to further highlight and foster closer relationships between Ireland and Malaysia.

Saying that the two countries had much to offer and learn from each other, Reynolds expressed the belief that there were tremendous potentials for further development of links in a broad range of areas, including trade, investments, industrial co-operation, education and health.

On the need for co-operation at the international level, Reynolds commended Dr Mahathir for playing what he termed as +a leading role in highlighting the need for a multilateral approach to major regional and global problems.+

Dr Mahathir, he said, had contributed significantly to the current debate on this issue.

He agreed that the ending of the Cold War did not remove or resolve all sources of international tension.

Stressing that Ireland and Malaysia had many things in common, Reynolds said both countries did not only share a common belief in the United Nations and the principles laid down in its Charter but had also participated in UN peacekeeping operations. -- more

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At present, the UN was actively involved in implementing the Paris Peace Accords on Cambodia, to which Malaysia was an original signatory, he added.

In addition, Malaysia and Ireland were both contributors to the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) which indicated a tangible expression of their shared belief in the UN and their commitment to work pragmatically for peace, he said. -- Bernama