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Mahathir-Japan

MAHATHIRS SAYS MALAYSIA WILL NOT OBJECT TO JAPAN'S BID FOR UN POST

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SHAH ALAM, May 7 (Bernama) -- Malaysia, while not objecting to Japan's bid to join the United Nations Security Council, wants the current imbalance in the council's membership be rectified, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"While we agree to Japan and Germany as members, developing countries too should be given places in the Security Council. Otherwise, it'll be one-sided like the present and this is unhealthy," he said in response to questions from reporters after opening the Usra Tampi (M) Sdn Bhd factory which manufactures plastic components, here.

He was asked to comment on today's newspaper report quoting Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong as saying that he supported Japan's bid to join the Security Council.

"Our view is that there shouldn't be permanent members and veto power. Non-developed country like ours too should also be eligible even as non-permanent member or on rotation basis," he said.

As such, he said efforts should be undertaken now to rectify the imbalance in membership in the Security Council. --more

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▼07/05/22-19MST

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Mahathir-Japan 2 Shah Alam

On the possibility of Japan becoming a military power if accepted as a permanent member, Dr Mahathir believed it would not be so "because if it does, China could become a military power too in the region."

On national security, he said Malaysia had adequate security arrangement and did not need foreign bases or protection from outside.

Furthermore, the country should learn to defend itself militarily or by other means, not by relying on help from others, he said.

"The safety of a country does not depend on military power alone. So, there's no need for us to invite foreign troops and they'll not come too if it didn't involve their interest," he said.

He cited as example the situation in Bosnia where developed countries's concern over safety of their troops outweighed their desire to help. --more

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On the deteriorating situation in Cambodia, Dr Mahathir regretted the attitude of the Khmer Rouge whose doings he believed could eventually lead to destruction of their country.

Asked on Singapore's move to seriously consider joining the North American Free Trade Agreement (Nafta) if it were invited, he said it was their prerogative.

But as far as Malaysia was concerned, it would not join Nafta even if it were extended to include Asian countries, he said.

"We're not interested. We don't like close trade block," he said.

On the activities of the Islamic religious group, Arqam, Dr Mahathir said its leaders tried to implant the belief among the members that the country should be governed by the ulamak.

He said it was not easy to take action against the group because it had a large following. --Bernama

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