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Mahathir-US

MAHATHIR HAILS US' LIFTING OF VIETNAM TRADE EMBARGO

From Azman Ujang,

MANILA, Feb 4 (Bernama) -- Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr

Mahathir Mohamad today hailed the United States' decision to lift its trade embargo on Vietnam, saying a more prosperous Vietnam will help enhance stability in the region.

He said the move was long overdue and it was not in the interest of the US or other countries, especially in the region, to maintain the embargo merely because of the issue of American soldiers who were missing in action during the Vietnam War which Vietnam had still to account for.

"If you fight any war, you are bound to get many people missing in action. And if you have to wait to find all of them, it will have to take a long time," he said in response to a question by a Filipino businessman during a lunch hosted for him by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, here.

President Bill Clinton announced the lifting of the 19-year embargo today.

Dr Mahathir, who is here on a four-day official visit, said the lifting of the trade embargo would further spur Vietnam's current rapid economic growth which in turn would encourage other countries in the region to increase trade and investment. -- more

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The end of the embargo would not only benefit Vietnam through economic recovery but also the United States and other countries.

"Malaysia believes that every country should prosper because in this way there will be less likelihood of them causing problems to their neighbours.

"If a country is poor, then it can cause cross-border problems," he said.

He said Japanese investment in Malaysia not only had made the country to prosper but in turn, Japan benefited because more and more Malaysians were buying Japanese goods.

Malaysians were now also encouraged to invest in other countries not only to get returns from their investment but also to enable them to have a vested interest in ensuring the prosperity of other countries and contribute towards greater regional peace and stability, he added. --

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