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PM-EAEC  
EAEC NOT DEAD, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has said that the East Asia Economic Causus (EAEC) is not dead and it can be formed once the United States stops saying no.

"It's not dead. It's far from being dead," he said when asked whether the EAEC is dead considering the United States is still opposed to its formation.

Dr Mahathir said this in an interview on Malaysia's economic policies and international relations over Cable News Network which was monitored here last night.

He said the Asia-Europe (Asem) meeting in Bangkok earlier this year was "de facto an EAEC meeting with the Europeans."

Dr Mahathir proposed the formation of the EAEC in 1990 to promote closer trade cooperation among East Asian countries.

The Prime Minister, who is in New York to attend the United Nations' 51st General Assembly, in the interview with Fred Katayama over the Business Asia programme, also expressed the hope that Myanmar would become a full Asean member soon.

"I think Burma (Myanmar) would become a full member soon, and should become a full member soon," he said adding that the government believed that by contacting and showing Myanmar what can be done in other countries, they could reform some of their systems.

When asked about the US stand on Myanmar's human rights policy, Dr Mahathir said it could not be resolved by threatening the country.

"Human rights policies cannot be corrected simply by threatening people. Engagement, we think, is much more effective," he said.

On what can be done to reform the United Nations (UN), Dr Mahathir said that the UN should change the current system that "winners" of the second World War have a right to gain permanent seats in the Security Council and hold veto power.

"...the winners of the last war claim a perpetual right to veto everybody, to be permanent members...this is history, we should forget about it," he said adding that a country holding veto against 184 others is not only ridiculous but undemocratic.

Dr Mahathir said the UN should instead adopt a different system in which for example veto can only be cast by more than one permanent member with support from one or two non-permanent members.

He also said accepting Japan as one of the permanent member of the Security Council is something that can be considered.

When asked whether UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali should be elected for another term, the Prime Minister said that Boutros-Ghali should be replaced because he was less than sensitive.

"For example when he was in Bosnia during the height of the killings he told the Bosnians that there are other people being killed elsewhere.

"It's like going to see a man who is dying and telling him that it is alright to die because other people are dying," he said.

Asked if he agrees that Asia should not be subjected to classical definition of capitalism as put forward by the West, the Prime Minister said Malaysia felt that the West did not have a monopoly of wisdom.

"We think there are other people who are equally able to formulate their own approach to many problems," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Malaysian government was not authoritarian but "it

is a government which considers it is its duty to work with the private sector in order to enrich the country".

On the labour shortage in Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said the country is currently phasing out labour intensive industries and encouraging capital intensive to solve the problem.

On whether Malaysia has the infrastructure to support hi-tech industries especially after the recent major power failure, Dr Mahathir said that measures are being taken to ensure the problem would not reccur.

Dr Mahathir was also asked about the Multimedia Super Corridor, Malaysia's interest in the composites industry and the Look East Policy.

Asked if Malaysia is revising the Look East Policy, the Prime Minister said Malaysia will continue to look East and West because "we made a lot of mistakes" in the past by looking only at the West.

-- BERNAMA