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MALAYSIA SUPPORTS PERMANENT REGIONAL REPRESENTATION IN SECURITY COUNCIL

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 29 (Bernama) -- Malaysia supports the establishment of a form of permanent regional representation in a restructured United Nations Security Council rather than representation based solely on power.

Its Permanent Representative to the UN Tan Sri Razali Ismail said regionalism had developed as it served the interest of all countries big or small, weak or strong.

At the political and security level, regionalism's role in global security could not be ignored or minimised, he said in his statement at the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters in New York. The text of his statement was faxed to Bernama by Wisma Putra today.

Razali said given the important role of regionalism, Malaysia was favourably disposed towards a form of regional representation in the council rather than representation based solely on the so-called power which individual countries wielded.

He said: "We do believe that permanent regional representation is the only way to move on the issue of permanent membership."

Currently, the powerful Security Council consists of 15 members, five of them permanent member. The remaining 10 are elected for two-year terms by the UN General Assembly.

Razali said given the rocklike position of those in favour of permanent membership and the equally strong opposition by those against, "an elaboration and acceptance" of permanent regional membership might be the only way out.

The "Permanent Five" are Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States.

Two days ago, ahead of the inaugural Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Bangkok, France had indicated its willingness to accept a proposal that Asean be given a permanent seat in an enlarged council.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who lauded France's stand, said it would be good if Asean could be a permanent member of the Security Council.

Razali said "the realities of the day cannot be reduced to an addition of one or two members primarily on power consideration, be it military, economic, land or population."

He added, however, that the reality was also that the derivatives of power of the Five (permanent members) as provided for under the UN Charter could not removed, unless they consented.

"But not even those countries in the higher echelons of the hierachial world structure can ignore the sweep of changes that are being brought about; and these have to take place in the Security Council," he said. --

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