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China-human rights

CHINA SUPPORTS KL's PROPOSAL TO REVIEW HUMAN RIGHTS CHARTER

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 22 (Bernama) -- China today expressed not only its support but also its appreciation to Malaysia for proposing a review of the 1948 United Nations Declaration on Human Rights.

China's Premier Li Peng said the statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad recently to call for the review of the declaration was in China's view one of "vision and courage".

"We want to express our appreciation. We also want to express our support," he said through a interpreter during a question-and-answer session after delivering a paper on "Towards A Relationship of Friendship and Good Neighbourliness Geared to the 21st Century", here.

The talk, organised by the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations, was also attended by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, other Cabinet ministers, deputy ministers and businessmen.

Dr Mahathir had said that Malaysia's call for a review of the declaration would not in any way dilute it but rather redress the unsympathetic view of human rights problems in developing countries.

He said Malaysia would continue to call for a review of the declaration which it considered as outdated.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who was here to attend the Asean Regional Forum and the Asean Post-Ministerial Meeting (PMC) recently, had said that Washington would resist any attempts to dilute the declaration which she claimed was accepted as a universal benchmark for protection of human rights.

The Malaysian proposal had created a clash between several Asian countries and the United States and the European Union during a news conference at the end of the PMC on July 29.

The two western allies had objected to the review, saying it was a serious attempt to dilute the declaration, drawing a heated rebuttal from Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and China.

Li also said that the current political and economic order was not "rational".

"The gap between the West and the East is becoming wider. So, there is an urgent need to address the problem," he said.

Li also dismissed claims by "some people (countries)" that China will be a threat to its neighbours.

"China will not pose a threat to its neighbours...China's military (expansion) was only defence (purposes) in nature. Up till today, China has not acquired an aircraft carrier yet." --BERNAMA

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