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Japanese consultant: I am still a member

CYBERJAYA, Sat. - Information technology consultant and author Kenichi Ohmae said today he has not resigned from the Multimedia Super Corridor International Advisory Panel.

"I have never resigned. I do not know how the rumours started. I am shocked to receive calls from many people enquiring about the matter."

Ohmae, who is one of the people behind the original concept of the MSC, said he had been in constant touch with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the state of the project.

"I see no reason to resign. Therefore, it (the rumour about his resignation) comes as a big surprise," he said.

Ohmae was speaking after interviewing Dr Mahathir for a documentary to be aired on his television station in Japan.

The Prime Minister had earlier officiated at the topping-up ceremony of the Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation's MSC Centre here.

The Far Eastern Economic Review recently reported that Ohmae and futurologist Alvin Toffler had resigned from the IAP because they were unhappy over the sacking of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister.

Ohmae said he was also in constant contact with Toffler, who said that he had not left the panel.

On the IAP which is scheduled to meet in February, he said it would be better for the members to gather when more projects were up and running like the multimedia university.

On the economic crisis, Ohmae felt Malaysia had no reason to panic as the country had managed it well.

He said the situation was manageable and Malaysia should focus on the enormous progress it had made in developing the country.

He said every country had its fair share of economic turbulence, including big countries like Japan, Britain and the United States.

Ohmae said once countries started to realign their economies with the world, they had to contend with risk. Malaysia's case was related more to "global misunderstanding of the real picture".

"That's why I interviewed the Prime Minister as things like the progress of the MSC and the economy are not well reported. I told Dr Mahathir that people in Japan believe the economic crisis has slowed down many projects including the MSC."

He said when things went bad, wide coverage was given, for example the problems of the Kuala Lumpur International Airport when it first opened.

"But when the airport started to function smoothly, no mention of it was made. So people still believe this airport is not functioning well."

Ohmae felt Malaysia needed to beef up its public relation activities in Japan to portray the country in a positive light.

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