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MAHATHIR-CHINA

WORLD MUST ACCEPT CHINA AS WORLD POWER

KUALA LUMPUR, July 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says the world must accept that China, with 1.3 billion of very hard-working, intelligent people, cannot help but be a powerful country eventually.

"If we can live with the US as the sole superpower, there is no reason why we cannot live with China as world power. China has practically no history of conquering and colonising neighbours. European powers have," he said in an interview with The Mainichi Newspapers of Japan published today.

He said as much as Japan feared China, China must fear the US-Japan alliance.

The US-Japan alliance is understandable if it is not directed at other nations, he said.

Unfortunately, Dr Mahathir said the US "shows open hostility to some countries in Asia and the US-Japan alliance seems to be directed against these countries."

"This is not good because these countries would regard Japan as an enemy and there would always be tension in the region, he said.

Malaysia, he added does not want to have any enemy and is against the presence of foreign forces in the region.

"War is no longer a way of solving international problem. If there is another world war, the whole world would be destroyed," he added.

Dr Mahathir said he believed that nuclear weapons should be abolished and there should be an agreement to reduce research on new weapons.

He said he cannot understand why some countries refuse to outlaw land mines and why are landmines necessary when missiles can reach any point on earth.

Talking about the changes that he had seen in Japan after having been there for more than 50 times, he said he seldom saw poverty previously.

But during his latest to Nagoya earlier this year, Dr Mahathir said he saw lots of makeshift huts under elevated highways and in parks and was told that some six million people were jobless in Japan.

But what struck Dr Mahathir was that these people accepted their situation and chose to escape from their families rather than be a burden to them.

"The Japanese are nationalistic and proud of their independence," he said, adding that "but over the past five years or so, the Japanese seem to have lost some of their self-confidence and even national pride."

"It is right not to be militaristic but it is not wrong to be nationalistic," he said.

He said Japan has a good reason for rejecting militarism as it should be ready and willing to admit that it had done a lot of wrong in the past. But it should not be burdened by a permanent sense of guilt over actions committed more than half a century ago.

"I don't see Germany being reminded of its Nazi past. Nor is Germany required to go around apologising for Nazi atrocities during the war. But it would seem that every Japanese Prime Minister must apologise for deeds committed by people of two generations ago," he added. -- BERNAMA

SHO SHY