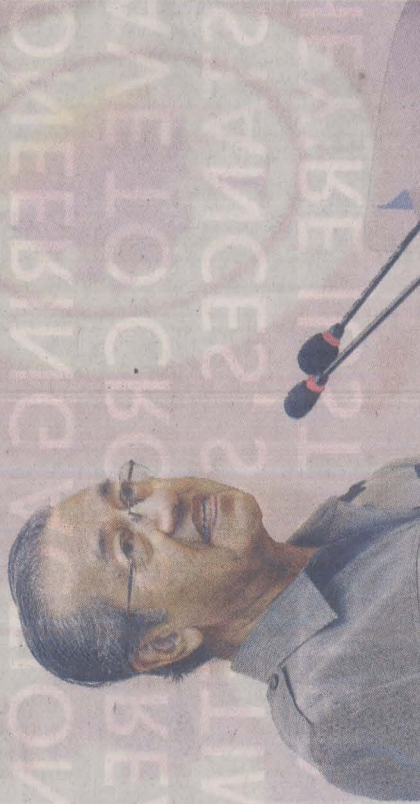


DATE: 20/10/2009

Word of caution:

Mahathir giving a speech on Strategic Positioning of the Malays in a Borderless World at Perdana Leadership Foundation in Putrajaya yesterday.
— Bernama



Dr M: Don't agree to unfair FTAs

The Star - 20/10/2009
Ex-PM cautions against lop-sided deal

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PUTRAJAYA: Developing nations including Malaysia have been cautioned not to sign lop-sided free trade agreements (FTAs).

Fine prints must be scrutinised and the impact thoroughly studied to avoid losing out in the long run, said former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"For example, United States-Singapore FTA is being used as a model on how other countries could benefit from borderless trade without the hassles of barriers such as tax.

"But Singapore need not give up anything when it signed the agreement as it is a free port and it does not impose tax anyway," he said.

However, Dr Mahathir cautioned countries like Malaysia would have to give up many things "for such an agreement that is more beneficial to the United States."

Dr Mahathir said this at the inaugural intellectual discourse series on Strategic Positioning of the Malays in a Borderless World organised by UjTM Alumni at Perdana Leadership Foundation premises here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said the bilateral FTAs are merely "lateral" tactics that would eventually help the Westerners achieve their mission to create a borderless world and subsequently monopolise the global economy.

"I am not saying that we shouldn't sign FTAs," said Dr Mahathir. "But we must reject clauses that will put us at the losing end."

Without political power, the Malays would be marginalised just like the Red Indians in United States, Aborigines in Australia and Maoris in New Zealand, he said.

Dr Mahathir said there seemed to be attempts to sponsor puppet leaders to facilitate the implementation of policies that were beneficial to the Western powers.

"Central America, for example, is actually controlled by American banana plantation operators, hence it is called Banana Republic," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia could have lost its grip on the economy if it gave in to Western-prescribed measures to overcome the 1997 economic crisis.

"We took unprecedented measures to protect our interest, and we have succeeded."