

China makes us feel safe, former Malaysian PM

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Former Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who had just had his 80th birthday, attended the ninth BusinessWeek CEO Summit held in Beijing on Nov. 15. He said China, as "one polar" of the world, plays a balancing role in face of America's super power position, which makes China's neighboring countries feel safe.

Mahathir said, we have only one super power (the United States), and a lot of problems with it. Perhaps China can be another polar, not big, but enough to strike a balance. If so, the world can be safe. He then explained that as Malaysia has had many exchanges with China -- as the two countries have a trading ties of more than 170 years -- Malaysia has never been conquered. However, after trading with Portugal, Malaysia was conquered by Portugal in 1915.

"China is only 2,100 kilometers away while Portuguese went as far as 8,000 kilometers to beat us. We were safe with Chinese but we have no such feeling as for Portuguese. Therefore I believe China should become a power, not in military but as a power able to balance other countries," said Mahathir. On that day Mahathir also made a speech titled "Sustainable Development and the Role of Enterprises in Geopolitics".

He cast doubt on the democratic system long advocated by the West. According to him, democracy is not a panacea to realize sustainable peace and stability. Democratic counties are often the most unstable ones. They always wish to spread their ideas to other places therefore make other countries unstable.

Mahathir says a system applicable in one country is not necessarily so in other countries and nor forever so in that same country. Universal democracy may be more haste less speed. Democracy is not different for different counties and what is most important is a gradual process. Holding that the current international system is not democratic, Mahathir believes international peace depends on the will of all countries, whether rich or poor.

Unfortunately, he says, the United Nations we have now is not a democratic institution. The counties that reign the body do not represent democracy as they believe that international disputes can be solved by laws. This makes the world not unstable. It not only bears on the internal peace of a single nation but also world peace.

Famous in the world political circles for daring to say "No" to the United States, Mahathir also made much effort in promoting Asian integration.

Mahathir was born in a poor family on December 20, 1925. After middle school, he opened a coffee shop, sold fruit and artwork. After graduating from medical school, he worked in governmental health department, later ran a private clinic. He became well-known among locals for his ethics and professional skill.

Mahathir has always been intensely interested in politics. He started his political career since joining the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) in 1946, and was elected member of lower house of parliament in 1964.

In June and July 1981, he was elected chairman of UMNO and chairman of the National Front respectively. In July the same year, he was elected as prime minister, serving as well defense minister, interior minister and finance minister. On October 30 2003, he resigned as prime minister and retired officially.

BusinessWeek CEO Summit is an annual event aimed to promote the exchange and cooperation between Asian countries and their industrial and commercial circles as well as to improve Asian economy.

Source: People's Daily Online | <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/>