

MAHATHIR-PLANT

FROM MUSA SCULLY P

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NEW YORK, OCT. 5 (BERNAMA)-- DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID REYNOLDS ALUMINIUM HAD DECIDED TO GO AHEAD WITH ITS ABOUT US\$1 BILLION ALUMINIUM PLANT PROJECT IN SARAWAK.

HE SAID FOLLOWING DISCUSSIONS WITH OFFICIALS OF THE COMPANY LED BY ITS CHAIRMAN (INTERNATIONAL DIVISION) LOUIS REYNOLDS BOTH SIDES WOULD WORKOUT HOW BEST TO MAKE THE INDUSTRY VIABLE.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THERE WAS NO DISAGREEMENT ON THE PROJECT BUT ONLY THE MATTER INVOLVING THE SOURCE OF POWER HAD TO BE SOLVED.

MALAYSIA WAS THINKING IN TERMS OF GAS WHILE THE COMPANY FAVOURED HYDRO ELECTRICITY.

THE COMPANY, HE SAID, HAD NOW AGREED TO MALAYSIA'S VIEW AND WOULD GO AHEAD WITH THE PROJECT EVEN IF THE SOURCE OF SUPPLY WAS GAS.

THE USE OF GAS COULD BE A LITTLE BIT COSTLY BUT IT WOULD ENABLE THE PROJECT TO BE BROUGHT FASTER INTO OPERATION AS SARAWAK HAD HUGE GAS RESOURCES.

ON HIS MEETING WITH US SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE THE DEPUTY PREMIER SAID VANCE FRIEFED HIM ON THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENT.

THEY ALSO DISCUSSED THE REFUGEE PROBLEM IN MALAYSIA AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN US AND ASEAN.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID ENCIK VANCE HAD UNDERTAKEN TO TALK TO OTHER COUNTRIES ON THE REFUGEE PROBLEM AND USE WHATEVER INFLUENCE THE US HAD ON THEM TO TAKE IN MORE REFUGEES.

ON ASEAN, ENCIK VANCE INDICATED THAT THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US WAS GROWING CLOSER FOLLOWING THE US-ASEAN DIALOGUE IN WASHINGTON RECENTLY.

THEY ALSO DISCUSSED THE FORTHCOMING VISITS OF OPIC (OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENTS CORPORATION) AND US IMPORT-EXPORT BANK MISSION TO ASEAN COUNTRIES. DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE VISITS WOULD IMPROVE TRADE RELATIONS.

HE SAID ATTENDANCE AT YESTERDAY'S INVESTMENT SEMINARS WAS BEYOND EXPECTATIONS.

IN ALL, 250 AMERICAN COMPANIES REGISTERED THEIR EXECUTIVES AS PARTICIPANTS AND THEY WERE AT A VERY SENIOR LEVEL.

SOME OF THE US INDUSTRIALISTS WOULD BE VISITING MALAYSIA SOON. MANY INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WERE HELD WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND PRIVATE SECTOR, HE SAID.

THEY DISCUSSED INVESTMENT IN CONSTRUCTION, PETRO-CHEMICAL, PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS, WOOD MOULDINGS AND RUBBER BASED PRODUCTS.

--BERNAMA 1058/AH