

MAHATHIR - MAS ๙'๙'๙'

79 P
KUALA LUMPUR, FEB. 13 (BERNAMA) — MAS MUST RID ITSELF OF IRRESPONSIBLE AND DISLOYAL EMPLOYEES IF THE AIRLINE IS TO BE A VIABLE VENTURE AND FOR THE COUNTRY TO HAVE SUITABLE AIR SERVICES, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

ONE WAY IT COULD DO THIS WAS BY SACKING THESE WORKERS FOR FLOUTING RULES AND CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS, THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ADDED AT A PRESS BRIEFING AT HIS OFFICE HERE.

THE POSSIBILITY OF DISSOLVING MAS AND FORMING A NEW AIRLINE WITH NEW WORKERS AND NEW MANAGEMENT WAS AMONG THE POSSIBILITIES THAT WOULD BE STUDIED IN OVERCOMING THE PRESENT CRISIS, HE SAID.

+EVERY POSSIBILITY WILL BE STUDIED BEFORE DECIDING ON THE COURSE OF ACTION,+ HE ADDED.

+WE MAY CLOSE IT DOWN, WE MAY RE-OPEN IT — IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHETHER THE PUBLIC WANTS A NATIONAL AIRLINE. IF SO, IT MUST HAVE LOYAL WORKERS.+

HE SAID IF THE STAND-OFF BETWEEN THE AIRLINE EMPLOYEES UNION AND THE MAS MANAGEMENT CONTINUED, NEW WORKERS WHO WERE LOYAL AND DEDICATED MIGHT HAVE TO BE RECRUITED. 222

HE SAID THAT TO SOME GROUPS OF MAS WORKERS, THE IMAGE OF MAS — ON WHICH THE COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT ALSO DEPENDED — +MEANS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING,+ AND THEY WERE PRESSURING THE MANAGEMENT TO ACCEDE TO ALL THEIR DEMANDS WITHOUT CARING WHAT THEY DESTROYED IN THE PROCESS. — BERNAMA MORE 1838/YF

££

N132 (F)

MAHATHIR-MAS 2 KUALA LUMPUR ๙'๙'๙'

ON THE POLICE ARRESTS OF 18 PEOPLE TODAY IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAS TROUBLES, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THE POLICE HAD REASONS FOR IT.

+CERTAIN PEOPLE HAVE DONE THINGS THAT ENDANGER THE LIVES OF OTHER PEOPLE, AND THIS IS VERY SERIOUS,+ HE ADDED. +THIS IS OTHER THAN DESTROYING MAS — WE CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE PEOPLE SABOTAGING THE COUNTRY.+

ON THE TAMPERING OF MAS AIRCRAFT THAT LED TO THE SUDDEN DECISION LAST NIGHT TO SUSPEND ALL THE AIRLINE'S FLIGHTS, HE SAID TWO AIRCRAFT WERE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN TAMPERED WITH, AND THIS MEANT THE SAFETY OF THE OTHER AIRCRAFT COULD NO LONGER BE ENSURED UNTIL STRICT CHECKS WERE MADE ON THEM.

THE TAMPERING INVOLVED +CERTAIN INTERFERENCES WHICH CAN CAUSE A PLANE NOT TO REGISTER CERTAIN THINGS ESSENTIAL FOR FLYING, AND SIMPLE THINGS WHICH CAN PREVENT A PLANE FROM TAKING OFF.+

+WE'VE GOT DEFINITE SUSPICION, AND THIS HAS TO BE PROVED,+ HE ADDED. — BERNAMA MORE 1843/YF

MAHATHIR- MAS 3 KUALA LUMPUR 金'金'金'

AT THE OUTSET, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THERE WAS NO DESIRE ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT TO BE UNFAIR TO ANYONE BUT AS A DEVELOPING NATION, MALAYSIA COULD NOT AFFORD TO BE VERY LAX ABOUT HOW THE COUNTRY WAS BEING MANAGED.

IT COULD NOT AFFORD THE KIND OF ATTITUDE THAT BELIEVED IN DOING DAMAGE TO OTHERS TO BENEFIT A PARTICULAR GROUP, AND SUCH GROUPS MUST LEARN THAT THEY COULD NOT AFFORD TO DO THINGS THIS WAY.

WHEN MAS WAS FORCED NOT TO FUNCTION, IT AFFECTED NOT ONLY THE +CAPITALIST EMPLOYERS,+ BUT ALSO THOSE WHO DEPENDED ON ITS SERVICES SUCH AS BUSINESSMEN, THOSE WHO HAD TO TRAVEL URGENTLY TO SEE SICK OR DYING RELATIVES, AND THOSE WHO EARNED THEIR LIVELIHOOD BY PROVIDING SERVICES TO MAS.

+SINCE MAS WAS FORMED, WE'VE BEEN SEEING REPEATED INDUSTRIAL STRIFE WITHIN MAS, WHOSE PROBLEM WAS THAT IT WAS A VERY VULNERABLE INDUSTRY,+ HE ADDED.

+THE NATURE OF ITS BUSINESS IS THAT WHEN ITS WORKERS GO ON STRIKE, IT HITS NOT ONLY THE EMPLOYERS BUT A LOT OF OTHERS — PASSENGERS, CATERERS, THOSE INVOLVED ONE WAY OR OTHER WITH MAS — AND OUR NATURAL TENDENCY WAS TO ACCEDE TO THEIR DEMANDS BECAUSE WE DO NOT LIKE TO SEE THE PEOPLE SUFFER.+ — BERNAMA MORE 1848/YF

MAHATHIR - MAS 4 KUALA LUMPUR 金'金'金'

EVERYTIME THE THREAT WAS BOYCOTTING OVERTIME FOLLOWED BY A GO-SLOW, WHICH WAS ACTUALLY AN INDUSTRIAL ACTION LAND CONSTITUTED A STRIKE IF ANNOUNCED, BUT BECAUSE IT WAS NOT ANNOUNCED, IT WAS NOT VERY EASY TO DETECT IT AND PICK ON THE DOERS.

THIS HAPPENED EVERYTIME THERE WAS THE SLIGHTEST DELAY IN REACHING SETTLEMENT DURING NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE UNION AND THE MANAGEMENT, AND ITS EFFECT WAS TO DESTROY THE IMAGE OF MAS WHEN IT WAS TRYING TO COMPETE WITH SO MANY OTHER AIRLINES WHICH WERE BIGGER, IN THE ASEAN REGION ITSELF.

DURING EVERY NEGOTIATION FOR REVISION OF SALARIES EVERY THREE YEARS, THE UNION USED PRESSURE TACTICS WHICH TENDED TO ESCALATE, AND WHEN THE MAS MANAGEMENT REFUSED TO BOW DOWN THIS TIME, IT ESCALATED TO A GO-SLOW, AND BECAUSE THIS WAS NOT LAWFUL, THE REGISTRAR OF TRADE UNIONS SUSPENDED THE UNION.

+THE UNION REFUSED EVEN TO SEE US,+ DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID. +WHEN WE TAKE ONE DECISION, THEY TOOK ANOTHER ACTION. EVERYTHING WE DID THEY SAID WAS WRONG.+

MAS HAD MADE EVERY EFFORT TO SETTLE THE DISPUTE, BUT THE UNION, INSTEAD OF MAKING COUNTER-OFFERS TO THE MANAGEMENT, DISTORTED THE MANAGEMENT'S OFFERS TO INFLAME THE EMOTIONS OF THE EMPLOYEES. — BERNAMA MORE 1919/YF

THE MAS OFFER OF AN AVERAGE EIGHT PER CENT HIKE IN PAY WAS IN FACT A CONSIDERABLE INCREASE, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID, AND FOR THE LOWER GRADE EMPLOYEES, THE INCREMENTS PROPOSED WERE 16 PER CENT, WHICH WAS MORE THAN WHAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD GIVEN ITS WORKERS IN THE LAST PAY REVISION, SO MUCH SO THAT AN LCE-QUALIFIED UNSKILLED MAS WORKER WOULD TAKE HOME ABOUT \$300 A MONTH.

THE CABIN CREW ALSO ENJOYED A LOT OF FACILITIES SUCH AS ALL-EXPENSES-PAID OFFDAYS OVERSEAS, MEAL ALLOWANCES BEING GIVEN EVEN WHEN THEY ATE ON BOARD DURING FLIGHTS, AND THEIR WORKING CONDITIONS WERE THE SAME AS IN OTHER AIRLINES.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ALSO DEPLORED FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN THE MAS DISPUTE, IN APPARENT REFERENCE TO THE THREAT BY THE INTERNATIONAL AIRLINE FEDERATION TO BOYCOTT SERVICING OF MAS PLANES ABROAD IN SUPPORT OF THE AEU.

+SINCE INDEPENDENCE, ONE OF OUR CARDINAL PRINCIPLES IS THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO INTERFERENCE BY ANY FOREIGN POWER IN OUR INTERNAL AFFAIRS, + HE SAID.

+HOWEVER, THIS HAS ESCAPED THE NOTICE OF SOME OF OUR TRADE UNION LEADERS, AND THEY FEEL THAT WHEN THEY'VE GOT PROBLEMS, THEY CAN USE FOREIGN TRADE UNIONS TO SUPPORT THEM.

+SOME OF THESE FOREIGN UNIONS HAVE EVEN ORDERED US TO DO THIS AND TO DO THAT. I'M ASHAMED TO SAY THAT OUR UNION LEADERS HAVE RESORTED TO THIS. + — BERNAMA MORE

MAHATHIR - MAS 6 KUALA LUMPUR 金'金'金'金'金'

HE SAID THE FOREIGN UNIONS +DO NOT HAVE ANY LOVE FOR US, + AND THIS WAS EVIDENCED BY THE ACTION OF THE TEXTILE WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES WHO FOUGHT FOR PROTECTIONIST LAWS THOUGH+OUR WORKERS ARE AFFECTED.+

HE SAID THESE FOREIGN WORKERS WERE JUST AS LIKELY TO HIT AT THE LOCAL WORKERS IF IT SUITED THEM, AND IT SO HAPPENED THAT IN THE PRESENT CASE, BY HELPING THE AEU THEY WERE DESTROYING THE NATIONAL AIRLINE.

THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, WAS AWARE OF A CERTAIN EX-MALAYSIAN TRADE UNIONIST WHO WAS TRYING TO GET EVERYBODY ELSE (FROM OVERSEAS) TO DESTROY MAS.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID WHAT WAS HAPPENING NOW SHOULD NOT BE THE CONCERN ONLY OF THE GOVERNMENT BUT ALSO THE PRESS AND THE PEOPLE.

ON THE NEXT STEP FOLLOWING THE GROUNDING OF ALL MAS AIRCRAFT, THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SAID THIS DID NOT MEAN MAS HAD CLOSED DOWN.

THE AIRCRAFT WOULD BE ALLOWED TO BE FLOWN AGAIN ONLY IF THEY WERE CERTIFIED AIRWORTHY — WHETHER ALL OR SOME WOULD FLY AGAIN AND WHEN WOULD DEPEND ON THE ADVICE GIVEN.

ON THE FUTURE OF MAS, HE SAID IT WAS +QUITE DIM+ IF THE EMPLOYEES WERE SO IRRESPONSIBLE AS TO TAMPER WITH THE PLANES.

+WE CAN'T AFFORD TO KEEP THEM (THESE WORKERS), + HE STRESSED.

+IF WE'VE GOT EMPLOYEES OUT TO DESTROY THE IMAGE OF MAS, WE CAN'T AFFORD TO KEEP THEM. +

—BERNAMA MORE 1937/AH

MAHATHIR - MAS 7 KUALA LUMPUR ㄟ'ㄟ'ㄟ'ㄟ'ㄟ'

+SO IF MAS IS TO SURVIVE, IT MUST BE SURE OF LOYAL WORKERS DEDICATED TO IT. MAS MUST KNOW THAT ITS WORKERS WILL GIVE 100 PER CENT SERVICE.+

ON ARBITRATION TO SOLVE THE DISPUTE, THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SAID HE DID NOT SEE HOW THIS COULD BE DONE IN A SITUATION WHERE THE LAW HAD BEEN BROKEN THROUGH GO-SLOWS, BREACHES OF CONTRACT, INDISCIPLINE AND TAMPERING OF AIRCRAFT.

BOTH LABOUR AND MANPOWER MINISTER, DATUK RICHARD HO, AND TRANSPORT MINISTER TAN SRI V. MANICKAVASAGAM, WHO WERE PRESENT AT THE BRIEFING, EXPLAINED HOW THEY AND THE MAS BOARD MEMBERS MADE VARIOUS EFFORTS TO GET THE UNION LEADERS TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE, + BUT THE UNION LEADERS JUST DON'T WANT TO TALK TO ANYONE AND ARE HIDING FROM EVERYONE.+

+IT'S A QUESTION OF DEFIANCE OF LAW AT THE MOMENT,+ DATUK HO SAID. +THE TRACK RECORD OF THE UNION SHOWS THAT IT IS BENT ON SOMETHING NOT ONLY ILLEGAL BUT TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE.+

EXPLAINING WHY THE REGISTRAR OF TRADE UNIONS DEREGISTERED 374 OF THE UNION MEMBERS AND MOVED FOR DEREGISTRATION OF THE UNION ITSELF, DATUK HO SAID THAT IN THE OVERALL INTEREST OF INDUSTRIAL PEACE IN THE COUNTRY, THE SITUATION HAD TO BE NIPPED IN THE BUD. —BERNAMA MORE 1945/AH

MAHATHIR—MAS 8 KUALA LUMPUR ㄟ'ㄟ'ㄟ'ㄟ'

225

REPLYING TO QUESTIONS, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID IF THE MANAGEMENT WAS AT FAULT, THIS SHOULD HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO THE NOTICE OF THE GOVERNMENT LONG AGO, AND THERE WERE STILL PLENTY OF AVENUES FOR SUCH COMPLAINTS TO BE AIRED.

ON WHETHER WEAKNESSES IN MAS MANAGEMENT WOULD BE STUDIED, HE SAID: +WAIT AND SEE.+

HE WAS NOT SURE THAT THE CREATION OF ANOTHER AIRLINE SO THAT MAS DOES NOT HAVE A MONOPOLY IN THE COUNTRY WAS A FEASIBLE SOLUTION.

ON WHETHER FOREIGN AIRLINES WOULD BE GIVEN MORE LANDING RIGHTS IN VIEW OF SUSPENSION OF MAS SERVICES, HE SAID,+ WE MUST PROTECT OUR LANDING RIGHTS.+

—BERNAMA 1947/AH