

MAHATHIR 2 JAKARTA 22/3/79
FROM ZAINOOR SULAIMAN

JAKARTA, MARCH 22 (BERNAMA)--DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY EXPRESSED OPTIMISM ON THE POSSIBILITY OF ASEAN AIRLINES PARTICIPATING IN THE CHEAP AIR FARE SCHEME BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND EUROPE. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH BERNAMA BEFORE RETURNING TO KUALA LUMPUR, THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SAID AUSTRALIA HAD NOW ACCEPTED THE NEED TO REVIEW CERTAIN ASPECTS OF ITS INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION POLICY (ICAP).

"THEY EVEN WANT TO CONSIDER A POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION OF ASEAN COUNTRIES IN THE END-TO-END CHEAP AIR FARE SCHEME AND ALSO STOP-OVERS," HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR LEFT HERE AFTER CHAIRING THE ASEAN-AUSTRALIA MINISTERIAL MEETING ON CIVIL AVIATION WHICH ENDED HERE YESTERDAY.

--BERNAMA MORE HM 1320

MAHATHIR 2 JAKARTA 22/3/79

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DESCRIBED THE AUSTRALIAN PREPAREDNESS TO CONSIDER THE ASEAN PROPOSAL AS A POSITIVE STEP TOWARDS ACHIEVING A COMPROMISE OVER THE PROBLEM.

HE SAID THE MAIN OBSTACLE NOW WAS AUSTRALIA'S FEAR THAT THE CHEAP AIR FARE SCHEME MIGHT NOT BE VIABLE IF ASEAN AIRLINES WERE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE.

THEY FEARED THAT THE NUMBER OF PASSENGERS WOULD FLOW ELSEWHERE, AND THEY WOULD NOT GET SUFFICIENT NUMBER TO KEEP THE SCHEME VIABLE.

ACCORDING TO DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR, THERE MUST BE 85 PER CENT OCCUPANCY RATE TO MAKE THE CHEAP FARE SCHEME VIABLE.

--BERNAMA

MAHATHIR 3 JAKARTA 22/3/79

ON THE AUSTRALIAN PROPOSAL TO GIVE UP THE FIFTH FREEDOM IN NEGOTIATING STOP-OVER FARES SUITABLE TO ITS CHEAP FARE SCHEME, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID ASEAN COUNTRIES FELT THEY SHOULD EXERCISE THE FIFTH FREEDOM RIGHT TO PICK UP PASSENGERS DURING STOP-OVERS.

+IF AUSTRALIA DOES NOT WANT TO EXERCISE IT, IT IS HER CONCERN BUT WE STILL BELIEVE IN THE FIFTH FREEDOM,+ HE SAID.

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE OFFICIALS WERE NOW WORKING ON THE DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL FOR ASEAN PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHEME.

+AT THE END OF THE MONTH THEY SHOULD COME UP WITH FIGURES TO CONVINCE THE AUSTRALIANS INTO ALLOWING ASEAN TO PARTICIPATE.+

COMMENTING ON THE RESULTS OF YESTERDAY'S MEETING HE SAID THE OUTCOME WAS NOT VERY MUCH BELOW ASEAN'S EXPECTATION SO. -- BERNAMA MORE 1352/A1

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NO25: (F)

MAHATHIR 4 JAKARTA ㊦㊦㊦

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ALSO DISCLOSED THAT THE AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT MINISTER, ENCIK PETER NIXON, AND FOREIGN MINISTER ANDREW PEACOCK AT THE MEETING WITH HIM HAD EXPRESSED THEIR COUNTRY'S INTEREST IN SOLVING THE BOYCOTT BY AUSTRALIAN AIRPORT WORKERS TO ENABLE MAS TO RESUME ITS FLIGHTS TO SYDNEY, MELBOURNE AND PERTH.

+THEY ARE INTERESTED IN SOLVING THE PROBLEM BUT HOW THEY ARE GOING TO SOLVE IT IS SOMETHING ELSE, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID HE HAD CONVEYED DATUK HUSSEIN ONN'S THANKS TO THE MINISTERS FOR THE ASSISTANCE GIVEN BY THE AUSTRALIAN AUTHORITIES IN OBTAINING THE RELEASE OF MAS DC 10 AIRCRAFT.

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER WAS SEEN OFF AT THE AIRPORT BY THE INDONESIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, PROF. MOCHTAR KUSUMAATMADJA, THE MALAYSIAN AMBASSADOR HERE, TAN SRI MAHMOOD YUNUS AND THE ASEAN SECRETARY GENERAL DATUK ALI ABDILAH. — BERNAMA 1355/A1

MAHATHIR 5 JAKARTA (REOPENS ITEM NO25) ㊦㊦㊦

ON HIS RETURN TO KUALA LUMPUR, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID COTAC (THE ASEAN COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS) WOULD MEET IN SINGAPORE ON APRIL 2 TO WORK OUT THE NECESSARY FIGURES TO CONVINCE AUSTRALIA INTO ALLOWING ASEAN COUNTRIES TO PARTICIPATE IN ITS CHEAP AIR FARES SCHEME TO EUROPE.

HE ADDED THAT THE AUSTRALIANS HAD AGREED TO ALLOW ASEAN COUNTRIES TO PARTICIPATE IF SUCH PARTICIPATION WOULD NOT HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON ITS CHEAP AIR FARES SCHEME.

THE ASEAN MINISTERS, HE SAID, HAD PROPOSED A FARE WHICH WOULD BE 3 TO 5 PER CENT HIGHER THAN THE PROPOSED AUSTRALIAN FARE OF AUSTRALIAN \$568 (M\$1,420).

ASEAN HAD ALSO PROPOSED A SURCHARGE OF 10 PER CENT ON AUSTRALIAN STOPOVERS, HE ADDED. — BERNAMA MORL 1656/A1

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NO63: (F)

MAHATHIR 6 JAKARTA ㊦㊦㊦

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR VIEWED THE ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR AS A +BREAKTHROUGH.+ +WE SHOULD NOW PRODUCE FIGURES TO JUSTIFY THAT THEY WILL NOT BE AFFECTED BY OUR PARTICIPATION,+ HE ADDED.

HE DISAGREED THAT THE AUSTRALIAN CHEAP AIR FARES POLICY WAS MERELY SINGAPORE'S PROBLEM.

HE SAID +ALTHOUGH IT WAS ONLY SINGAPORE THAT WAS GREATLY AFFECTED NOW, WE WILL ALSO BE AFFECTED LATER ON.+

+WE HAVE TO SHOW OUR SOLIDARITY AS AN ASEAN GROUP.+

HE NOTED THAT SINGAPORE CAME OUT WITH A VERY GOOD STATEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS FEDERATION (ITF) RECENTLY.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR, WHO ALSO ANSWERED QUESTIONS ON THE INDUSTRIAL COORDINATION ACT (ICA), SAID THERE WOULD DEFINITELY BE AMENDMENTS TO THE ACT —+ I WANT TO SMOOTHEN THE PROCESS.+ BUT IT WOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED AT THE CURRENT PARLIAMENTARY SESSION BECAUSE OF LACK OF TIME, THE AMENDMENTS MIGHT INCLUDE THE PROVISION FOR AN APPEALS BOARD.

ON THE REPORTED CANCELLATION OF THE ECONOMIC MISSION TO HANOI, HE SAID IT WAS BECAUSE OF +PREOCCUPATION WITH OTHER MATTERS NOW.+

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE PRESENT CESSATION OF FLIGHTS TO AUSTRALIA WAS ONLY A TEMPORARY ONE. +IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT MAS WILL NOT FLY TO AUSTRALIA ANY MORE.+

IN THE END, +COMMON SENSE WILL PREVAIL,+ HE ADDED, REFERRING TO THE MAS CRISIS. — BERNAMA 1705/12