

79 (P)
 KUALA LUMPUR, JUNE 25 (BERNAMA) — THE DISPLAY OF DIPLOMATIC SKILL ON THE PART OF ASEAN COUNTRIES DURING THE LAST FEW MONTHS WOULD AUGUR WELL FOR THE FUTURE OF THE REGION, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD, SAID HERE TODAY.

THE ASEAN COUNTRIES NOT ONLY HAD MAINTAINED CORRECT POSTURE WITH REGARD TO THE INDO-CHINA AND CHINA-INDOCHINA CONFLICTS BUT MANAGED TO APPEAR MORE UNITED AND POLITICALLY SOLID, HE SAID.

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER WAS OPENING THE TWO-DAY CONFERENCE ON THE IMPACT OF AN EMERGENT CHINA ON THE ASEAN ECONOMIES HERE.

THE CONFERENCE ORGANISED BY THE INTERNATIONAL AGENCY CALLED +CONSULASIA+ IS BEING ATTENDED BY 60 REPRESENTATIVES MAINLY FROM ASEAN COUNTRIES.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID IF THIS ADROITNESS ON THE PART OF ASEAN CONTINUED, THE EMERGENCE OF CHINA AS AN ECONOMIC POWER WAS NOT LIKELY TO UPSET ASEAN, AT LEAST IN THE NEAR FUTURE. — BERNAMA MORE 1320/YF

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NO31 (F)

MAHATHIR-ASEAN 2 KUALA LUMPUR

HE FELT THAT THIS SCENARIO WAS NOT DIFFICULT TO PREDICT BUT THE DISTANT FUTURE WAS DIFFICULT TO SPECULATE.

+THE CHINESE AND THE VIETNAM LEADERS ARE ELDERLY AND SHOULD THE TWO COUNTRIES BECOME FRIENDS AGAIN BECAUSE OF A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP, THEN A WHOLE NEW SET OF SITUATIONS MAY CONFRONT THE ASEAN COUNTRIES,+ HE SAID.

+VIETNAM WOULD THEN HAVE LITTLE FEAR OF A VULNERABLE REAR AND MIGHT BE TEMPTED INTO VENTURES BEYOND THE KAMPUCHEAN BORDER+.

THE CHANCES OF COMPLETE RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE CHINESE AND THE VIETNAMESE WERE SLIM AS FAR AS COULD BE SEEN.

ASEAN COUNTRIES, HE ADDED, COULD THEREFORE LOOK FORWARD TO A FAIRLY GOOD PERIOD OF STABILITY AND ABSENCE OF INVASION THREATS.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR, IS ALSO THE TRADE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER SAID THAT ASEAN'S CONCEPT OF NEUTRALITY ALSO EMPHASISED ON TRADE AND ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION WITH CHINA. — BERNAMA MORE

1325/YF

MAHATHIR-ASEAN 3 KUALA LUMPUR

THE MAINTAINING OF STABILITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA IN THE CONTEXT OF AN EMERGENT AND MILITARILY CAPABLE CHINA WAS AS MUCH AN ASEAN CONCERN, HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT THE PAST PERFORMANCE OF ASEAN WAS SUCH THAT EVERY EFFORT WOULD BE MADE TO ENSURE AN EMERGENT CHINA WOULD NOT HAVE ANY DISRUPTIVE INFLUENCE IN THE REGION.

+INDEED THE ASEAN GOVERNMENTS AND CERTAINLY MALAYSIA IS WORKING TOWARDS A HEALTHY RELATION THAT WILL BE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL FOR THE FUTURE+ HE ADDED.

LATER, IN AN ANSWER TO A PARTICIPANT'S QUESTION, HE SAID THAT EACH OF THE ASEAN COUNTRIES HAD TO DEVELOP ITS OWN MEANS TO DEFEND ITS OWN INTERNAL STABILITY.

+WHAT WE FEAR IS THE STEPPING-UP OF EFFORTS BY SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS TO TOPPLE OR SUBVERT THE GOVERNMENT,+ HE ADDED.

HE SAID THAT SUCH ACTIONS WOULD BE THE DESTABILISING FACTOR WHICH WOULD BRING ADVERSE RESULTS TO ANY ASEAN COUNTRY. — BERNAMA MORE 1333/YF

MAHATHIR-ASEAN 4 KUALA LUMPUR

ON THE QUESTION OF TIES BETWEEN HONG KONG AND CHINA HE DESCRIBED HONG KONG AS A SERVICE CENTRE FOR CHINA TO FOSTER TRADE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY THE ASEAN NATIONS.

HE SAID THAT CHINA NEEDED HONG KONG AND MANY ASEAN COUNTRIES MAINTAINED GOOD ECONOMIC AND TRADE TIES WITH HONG KONG.

AMONG THE PAPERS TO BE TABLED AT THE CONFERENCE ARE ON CHINA'S GEO-POLITICAL OUTLOOK BY A POLITICAL SCIENTIST, DR. KENNETH LIEBERTHAL, ASEAN AND CHINA'S CHANGING TRADE PATTERNS BY UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE ECONOMICS LECTURER DR. JOHN WONG, CHINA'S CAPITAL CONCEPTS AND THE ROLE OF ASEAN BANKERS BY DR. SURA SANITTANONT FROM THAILAND AND PRESENT CONDITIONS AND POTENTIAL OF THE CHINESE ECONOMY BY DR. NICHOLAS LARDY OF YALE UNIVERSITY. --
BERNAMA 1337/YF