

NO27: (F)
MAHATHIR ㄉ'ㄉ'ㄉ'

BY JAMIL ABDULLAH AND ABDUL RAHMAN SULAIMAN

KUALA LUMPUR, OCT. 26²¹ (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAYS IT IS HIS +DREAM+ TO SEE MALAYSIA EMERGING AS A DEVELOPED COUNTRY WHICH ENJOYS THE SAME INTERNATIONAL RESPECT AS ANY OTHER DEVELOPED NATION BUT WITHOUT HAVING TO LOSE ITS GOOD CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUES.

THE PRIME MINISTER POINTS OUT THAT ALTHOUGH COMPARATIVELY SPEAKING THE COUNTRY IS GAINING SUCH RESPECT, MALAYSIA HAS NOT REACHED THE STATUS OF A DEVELOPED COUNTRY.

+THERE IS STILL A LOT MORE TO BE DONE+, HE SAID IN A SPECIAL INTERVIEW WITH BERNAMA AND REPRESENTATIVES OF TWO MAJOR LOCAL NEWSPAPER GROUPS HERE ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 100TH DAY IN OFFICE.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR TOOK OATH OF OFFICE AS MALAYSIA'S FOURTH PRIME MINISTER BEFORE THE YANG DI-PERTUAN AGONG ON JULY 16 FOLLOWING TUN HUSSEIN ONN'S WITHDRAWAL.

LAST FRIDAY WAS HIS 100TH DAY IN OFFICE. -- BERNAMA MORE 1517/1B

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MAHATHIR 2 KUALA LUMPUR ㄉ'ㄉ'ㄉ'

THE IMPROMPTU INTERVIEW AT HIS OFFICE WAS CONDUCTED IN A RELAXED AND INFORMAL ATMOSPHERE.

THE PRIME MINISTER, SPEAKING HIS MIND, SPENT MORE THAN TWO HOURS ANSWERING QUESTIONS WHICH COVERED WIDE RANGING SUBJECTS AND ISSUES AFFECTING THE NATION.

THE TRANSCRIPT IS REPRODUCED SEPARATELY.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID AS IT WAS NOW, SOME DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WERE STILL ADOPTING A PATRONISTIC ATTITUDE TOWARD MALAYSIA.

AS A RACE, MALAYSIANS MUST HAVE A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT SO THAT THEY COULD STAND ON AN EQUAL FOOTING WITH OTHER PEOPLES WITHOUT HAVING TO BE LOOKED DOWN BY OTHERS.

+TO ME, THIS IS IMPORTANT. I DON'T LIKE TO HEAR WHEREVER I GO AND WHENEVER I SAY THAT I'M A MALAYSIAN, PEOPLE WILL TURN THEIR FACES AND SAY: AH ... THE LAZY MALAY.

+THIS IS WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING. TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, THE SO-CALLED WEAKNESSES OF THE MALAYS ARE BEING RUBBED OFF ON THE OTHER RACES IN THIS COUNTRY. I REALLY CANNOT STAND THIS,+ HE SAID. -- BERNAMA MORE 1522/A1

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ASKED WHAT HE CONSIDERED AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE HE HAD TO FACE OVER THE LAST 100 DAYS, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID:
+THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IS TO MOTIVATE EVERYBODY, NOT ONLY THE OFFICIALS BUT ALSO THE PEOPLE ON THE WHOLE, SO THAT THEY WILL REALISE THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD THE NATION.+

HE SAID THE PEOPLE SHOULD BE MADE AWARE OF THEIR ROLE IN NATION BUILDING, A TASK WHICH IMPLIED STRIVING FOR NOT ONLY MATERIALISTIC DEVELOPMENT BUT ALSO A KIND OF SPIRITUAL ACHIEVEMENT FOR EVERYONE.

+AS THE SAYING GOES, MAN CANNOT LIVE BY EATING BREAD ALONE,+ HE STRESSED.

ON WHETHER OR NOT HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO DO WHAT HE WANTED TO DO SO FAR, THE PRIME MINISTER RECALLED THAT WHEN HE TOOK OVER FROM TUN HUSSEIN HE HAD ASKED THE PEOPLE FOR A YEAR FOR HIS GOVERNMENT TO PRODUCE RESULTS BECAUSE +I THOUGHT MAYBE AFTER A YEAR, YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO SEE DIFFERENCES.+

+WHETHER THERE ARE ANY DIFFERENCES OR NOT IN THE FIRST 100 DAYS, IT'S FAIRLY DIFFICULT FOR ME TO SAY.+

+OF COURSE, I KNOW WHAT INSTRUCTIONS I'VE GIVEN. WHETHER THESE INSTRUCTIONS ARE CARRIED OUT, WHETHER THEY ARE EFFECTIVE OR NOT, IT IS EASIER FOR PEOPLE OUTSIDE TO ASSESS,+ HE SAID. -- BERNAMA MORE 1527/A1

NO30: (F)
MAHATHIR 4 KUALA LUMPUR 卐'卐'卐'

+SITTING IN THIS ROOM, GIVING DIRECTIVES, MAKING DECISIONS AND ALL THAT DOES NOT GIVE ME A PERSPECTIVE FROM OUTSIDE AS TO HOW THOSE DIRECTIVES HAVE BEEN SEEN.+

+PEOPLE KEEP ON SAYING THAT THEY HAVE BEEN GIVING THESE ORDERS, THOSE ORDERS BUT WHAT ARE THE RESULTS? I REALLY DON'T KNOW,+ HE ADMITTED.

AN INTERVIEWER INTERRUPTED AND DREW THE PRIME MINISTER'S ATTENTION TO WHAT HAS GENERALLY BEEN DESCRIBED AS SOCIETY'S EXPECTATION OF HIS GOVERNMENT.

+DON'T YOU FEEL THAT SOCIETY HAS INFACCT BEEN AWAKENED TO SOMETHING NEW? THIS HAS PARTLY BEEN CALLED THE BEGINNING OF A TWO-M (MAHATHIR-MUSA) TRANSFORMATION. THERE IS NOW A NEW SENSE OF DIRECTION TOWARDS A CLEAN, EFFICIENT AND DISCIPLINED SOCIETY. DO YOU THINK IT'S FAIR FOR PEOPLE TO SAY THAT THERE IS A BEGINNING OF A TRANSFORMATION PROCESS?+ DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR WAS ASKED.

+I HOPE IT'S SO BUT WHETHER IT IS SO OR NOT IS SOMETHING ELSE. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE WHAT YOU SAY DONE. THIS IS WHAT BOTH MUSA (DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER) AND I WOULD LIKE TO SEE HAPPENING IN THIS COUNTRY,+ HE REPLIED. -- BERNAMA MORE 1531/A1

ND31:

(F)

MAHATHIR 5 KUALA LUMPUR 卐'卐'卐

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR DWELT AT LENGTH ON THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY, THE PROBLEM OF CORRUPTION, RACIAL HARMONY, MALAYSIA-BRITISH RELATIONS AND HIS GENERAL PERCEPTION OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

ON THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY, HE SAID IT WAS NOT MERELY AN ECONOMIC POLICY BUT ALSO A POLITICAL POLICY.

+IF IT IS PURELY ECONOMIC, WE WOULD GO FOR GROWTH ALL THE WAY. BUT YOU KNOW IF WE GO FOR GROWTH ALL THE WAY WITHOUT EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION, WE WILL HAVE POLITICAL INSTABILITY,+ HE EXPLAINED

THE PRIME MINISTER FELT THAT GIVEN THE CONSTRAINT OF HAVING TO MAINTAIN PLITICAL STABILITY, THE ECONOMIC GROWTH ACHIEVED BY THE COUNTRY UNDER THE ECONOMIC POLICY SO FAR HAD BEEN A VERY GOOD ONE.

+IF WE GO MERELY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH, WE FORGET ABOUT RURAL POVERTY, WE FORGET ABOUT THE MALAYS AND CHINESE NOT BEING EQUAL IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, I'M QUITE SURE OUR GROWTH RATE IS TREMENDOUS.+

+BUT THERE WILL BE TREMENDOUS POLITICAL INSTABILITY TOO AND EVERYBODY WILL COME OUT AND TEAR TO SHREDS ALL THESE THINGS,+ HE ADDED. -- BERNAMA MORE 1525/1B

NO32: (F)
MAHATHIR 6 KUALA LUMPUR ㄹ'ㄹ'

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IN VIEW OF THIS, THE PRIME MINISTER STRESSED THAT THE POLICY WOULD CONTINUE TO BE PURSUED AND THE PRESENT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE POLICY BE STEPPED UP.

THERE WAS ALSO A NEED TO EXPLAIN TO THE PEOPLE THAT WHATEVER ACTION THE GOVERNMENT WAS TAKING WAS IN CONFORMITY WITH THE POLICY.

HE SAID A LOT OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY WERE LARGELY THE RESULT OF A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF IT.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ASSURED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ALSO CONTINUE TO BUY FOREIGN-OWNED ASSETS SO LONG AS +THEY ARE THERE FOR SALE+.

+BUT THERE WILL COME A TIME WHEN ALL FOREIGN ASSETS ARE ALREADY BROUGHT BACK AND IF WE HAVE MONEY, WE CAN BUY ANY SHARES. WE CAN EVEN BUY FOREIGN COMPANIES OPERATING HERE.+

+THE FACT THAT SOMEBODY INVESTS IN THIS COUNTRY AND HAS 100 PER CENT OWNERSHIP DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE CANNOT BUY THE COMPANY. IF THEY ARE UP FOR SALE, WE WILL BUY,+HE SAID. --BERNAMA MORE 1530/1B

NO59 (F)
MAHATHIR 7 KUALA LUMPUR (ㄹ'ㄹ'ㄹ')

THE PRIME MINISTER REGRETTED THAT THE RECENT PURCHASE OF GUTHRIE SHARES BY PERMODALAN NASIONAL BERHAD HAD BEEN SEEN BY CERTAIN QUARTERS AS +BACK-DOOR+ NATIONALISATION.

+WE ARE DOING WHAT OTHER PEOPLE ARE DOING. AFTER ALL THE ARABS ARE BUYING, MOST OF THE OTHER PEOPLES ARE BUYING.+

+AT ONE TIME THE JAPANESE ARE BUYING BRITISH AND AMERICAN COMPANIES. SO, WHY CAN'T MALAYSIANS BUY? WE ARE JUST LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE,+ HE SAID.

ON RACIAL HARMONY, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR REITERATED THAT IT WAS HIS BELIEF THAT RACIAL PREJUDICES COULD BE WIPED OUT ONCE THE MALAYSIAN SOCIETY WAS FULLY RESTRUCTURED AS ENVISAGED BY THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY.

IN A SITUATION WHERE THE VARIOUS RACES HAD ATTAINED AN EQUAL STATUS IN TERMS OF ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND WHERE THEY WERE NO LONGER IDENTIFIABLE ON THE BASIS OF THEIR OCCUPATION, THE FEARS AND FEELINGS, OF INSECURITY BY ANY ONE RACE AND SCORES OF OTHER PROBLEMS RELATED TO RACIAL DIFFERENCES WOULD AUTOMATICALLY DIMINISH.--BERNAMA MORE 1723/HM

NO60 (F)
MAHATHIR 8 KUALA LUMPUR ㄹ'ㄹ'ㄹ'

HE REFUTED A CLAIM THAT RACIAL UNITY WAS NOW DETERIORATING COMPARED WITH THE SITUATION BEFORE THE MAY 13 DISTURBANCES IN 1969.

+THIS IS SOMETHING RELATIVE. IF WE WERE TO COMPARE THE PRESENT SITUATION WITH THE PAST, MAYBE THE PRESENT IS BETTER THOUGH WE MIGHT HAVE NOT REACHED THE STAGE WE SHOULD. THE SAME APPLIES IF WE WERE TO COMPARE OUR COUNTRY WITH OTHER COUNTRIES WITH MULTI-RACIAL POPULATIONS -- MAYBE THE SITUATION IN OUR COUNTRY IS BETTER,+ HE SAID.

+BUT IF WE WERE TO COMPARE OURS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES WHOSE POPULATION COMPRISES ONLY ONE RACE, THEN CERTAINLY WE HAVE NOT REACHED THAT STATUS.

+NEVERTHELESS, IT IS CORRECT TO SAY THAT MUCH STILL NEED TO BE DONE,+ HE STRESSED.

ON MALAYSIA-BRITAIN RELATIONS WHICH HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT +AFFECTED+ FOLLOWING MISINTERPRETATION BY THE BRITISH PRESS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S LATEST RULING PERTAINING TO PURCHASE OF BRITISH CONTRACTS, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID HE HIMSELF DID NOT KNOW WHY THE DIRECTIVE SHOULD BE MISUNDERSTOOD.--BERNAMA MORE 1732/HM

NO75 (F)
MAHATHIR 9 KUALA LUMPUR ٠'٠'٠'

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID: +I WAS VERY CLEAR ABOUT OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS BRITAIN, VERY, VERY CLEAR. WE ARE NOT CUTTING OFF TRADE RELATIONS WITH THEM, WE ARE NOT CARRYING A GENERAL BOYCOTT OF BRITISH GOODS. ALL WE ARE SAYING IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT BUY BRITISH IF WE CAN HELP IT.+

THE PRIME MINISTER ASSURED POTENTIAL FOREIGN INVESTORS THAT MALAYSIA WAS AS COMMITTED AS EVER TO FOREIGN INVESTMENT.

EVEN IF THE BRITISH WANTED TO INVEST IN THE COUNTRY, THEY WERE STILL WELCOMED, HE SAID, EXPLAINING THAT BRITISH COMPANIES WITH INVESTMENTS HERE AND WERE PRODUCING GOODS LOCALLY WERE NOT SUBJECT

TO THE GOVERNMENT'S LATEST RULING.

+THEY CAN SELL TO THE GOVERNMENT AND WE WILL BUY BECAUSE THEY ARE PRODUCING IN THIS COUNTRY AND THEIR PRODUCTS ARE MALAYSIAN PRODUCTS,+ HE STRESSED.

ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, THE PRIME MINISTER EXPLAINED THAT MALAYSIA HAD CERTAIN PRIORITIES IN CONDUCTING ITS RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.--BERNAMA MORE 1900/HM

NO76 (F)
MAHATHIR 10 KUALA LUMPUR ٠'٠'٠'

+TOP ON LIST IS OF COURSE RELATIONS WITH ASEAN COUNTRIES. SECOND COME THE ISLAMIC COUNTRIES THIRD THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES AND FOURTH THE COMMONWEALTH.+

+THOUGH WE HAVE THESE PRIORITIES, THE DISTANCE BETWEEN ONE ANOTHER NEED NOT BE THE SAME,+ HE EXPLAINED.

THE PRIME MINISTER POINTED OUT THAT THE LIST OF PRIORITIES MIGHT BE CHANGED FROM TIME TO TIME DEPENDING ON CIRCUMSTANCES AND DEVELOPMENTS.

AT IT WAS NOW, THE COMMONWEALTH WAS PLACED LAST ON THE LIST BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT REGARDED THE POLICIES OF CERTAIN MEMBER COUNTRIES WERE NOT BENEFICIAL TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY MALAYSIA.

+THIS IS THE SITUATION NOW. HOWEVER, IF ONE DAY THE COMMONWEALTH PROVES TO BE MORE FUNCTIONAL, WE MAY REVISE OUR PRIORITIES,+ HE SAID.--BERNAMA 1902/HM

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