

NO22: (F)  
MAHATHIR-LEAD

1981  
E KUALA LUMPUR, NOV. 3 (BERNAMA) -- (P) DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD DECLARED TODAY THAT MALAYSIA WILL NOT BE COWED BY THREATS FROM INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ORGANIATIONS IN THE NAME OF PRESS FREEDOM.

HE SAID ALTHOUGH THE COUNTRY HAD +SEVERAL BRUSHES WITH SUCH ORGANISATIONS BEFORE AND HAVE BEEN BADLY BRUISD, IN THE NAME OF PRESS FREDOM ITSELF, WE CANNOT BE COWED BY THREATS TO OUR COUNTRY'S IMAGE.+

THE PRIME MINISTER MADE THESE REMARKS WHEN HE OPENED THE 5TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ORGANISATION OF ASIAN NEWS AGENCIES (OANA) HERE.

THE FOUR-DAY ASSEMBLY HOSTED BY BERNAMA IS BEING ATTENDED BY MORE THAN 20 NEWS AGENCIES INCLUDING THOSE FROM THE NON-OANA PACIFIC MEMBER COUNTRIES.

EARLIER, THE PRIME MINISTER RELATED A LATEST INCIDENT GENERATED PRESUMABLY BY AN ARTICLE HE WROTE RECENTLY ON THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS.

HE SAID THAT FOLLOWING THE PUBLICATION OF THE ARTICLE BY LOCAL NEWSPAPERS, HE RECEIVED A TELEGRAM FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS INSTITUTE THREE DAYS AGO WHICH CARRIED AN IMPLIED THREAT TO THE IMAGE OF THE COUNTRY. -- BERNAMA MORE

1404/A1

NO23: (F)  
MAHATHIR-LEAD 2 KUALA LUMPUR

+YET THE SAME TELEGRAM POINTED OUT THAT THE UN MEMBERS HAD ACCEPTED HUMAN RIGHTS TO INCLUDE +FREEDOM .... TO IMPART IDEAS OF ALL KINDS ... + HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR STRESSED THAT WHAT HE DID WAS MERELY TO IMPART HIS IDEAS THRGH THE MEDIA, AN EXERCISE OF ONE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS TO WHICH HE WAS AS ENTITLED AS ANYONE ELSE.

+IT IS STRANGE THAT AN INSTITUTE THAT IS SUPPOSED TO PROTECT MY RIGHT SHOULD SEEK TO DENY IT.+

+YET WHEN DELIBERATE MISREPORTING AND AGITATIONS ARE CARRIED OUT THROUGH THE PRESS, NO COMMENT IS HEARD,+ HE ADDED.

THE PRIME MINISTER REITERATED THAT BEING A DEVELOPING COUNTRY, MALAYSIA WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED WITH THE FREQUENT INCIDENTS OF MISREPORTING, DELIBERATE OR OTHERWISE, ABOUT ITS AFFAIRS IN THE FOREIGN PRESS, ESPECIALLY THE WESTERN PRESS.

HE RECALLED THAT MALAYSIA HAD ITS FIRST FEW BITTER DOSES OF UNCALLED-FOR PUBLICITY SHORTLY AFTER THE MAY 13, 1969 RACIAL RIOTS IN WHICH FOREIGN READERS WERE REGALED WITH DISTORTED VIEWS ON THE EVENTS HAPPENING THEN. --  
BERNAMA MORE 1409/A1

NO30 (F)  
MAHATHIR-LEAD 3 KUALA LUMPUR

+INDEED DIRE PREDICTIONS WERE MADE WHICH IMPLIED THAT THE WORLD COULD WRITE OFF MALAYSIA.+

+IN THE EVENT, MALAYSIA DID NOT ONLY GET OVER ITS DIFFICULTIES, BUT EMERGED STRONGER, MORE UNITED AND MORE PROSPEROUS THAN EVER BEFORE,+ HE DECLARED.

THE PRIME MINISTER TRACED THE YEARS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT WHICH, HE SAID, SAW MALAYSIA OCCASIONALLY FALLING VICTIM TO THE WILD IMAGINATIONS AND SENSATION-MINDEDNESS OF SOME IRRESPONSIBLE JOURNALISTS, SOME OF WHOM HAD NOT EVEN VISITED THE COUNTRY.

+LATELY, AS A RESULT OF OUR LEGITIMATE ATTEMPTS TO GAIN CONTROL OF OUR OWN RESOURCES, WE HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO VARIOUS REPORTS CALCULATED TO FRIGHTEN AWAY FOREIGN INVESTERS FROM OUR COUNTRY,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO SINGLED OUT THE RECENT INCIDENT IN WHICH A CHILDREN'S ENCYCLOPEDIA PUBLISHED ABROAD PORTRAYED MALAYSIANS AS LIVING ON TREE-TOPS TO ESCAPE WILD ANIMALS.

HE TOLD THE DELEGATES: +FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE JUST ARRIVED IN THIS COUNTRY YOU MAY NOTICE THAT MALAYSIA IS NOT BY ANY MEANS THE MOST MODERN COUNTRY.+ -- BERNAMA MORE

NO31: (F)  
MAHATHIR-LEAD 4 KUALA LUMPUR

+WITHIN THE CAPITAL, KUALA LUMPUR, AND IN THE RURAL AREAS, THERE ARE PEOPLE LIVING IN DILAPIDATED HUTS. NEVERTHELESS, I AM SURE YOU WOULD HAVE NOTICED THAT WE DO NOT LIVE ON TREES. +

RECOGNISING THE FACT THAT OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE THIRD WORLD MIGHT HAVE COME ACROSS SIMILAR EXPERIENCES, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM LAY TO A GREAT EXTENT WITH THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THEMSELVES.

HE SAID THEY SHOULD NO LONGER ALLOW OTHERS TO MONOPOLISE INFORMATION ABOUT THEMSELVES BUT INSTEAD EXPAND THEIR EFFORTS AT INFORMING THE WORLD WHAT WAS THE TRUTH ABOUT THEMSELVES AND WHAT WAS FICTION.

+ASIANS SHOULD NOT FALL INTO THE PATTERN OF SENSATIONALISM AND UNMITIGATED EMBELLISHMENT OF THE TRUTH THAT CHARACTERISE THE WESTERN PRESS, + HE STRESSED.

IN THIS CONNECTION, THE PRIME MINISTER WELCOMED THE PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ASIAN NEWS NETWORK (ANN) BY THE NEWS AGENCIES OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC NATIONS. -- BERNAMA MORE 1452/A1

NO32: (F)  
MAHATHIR-LEAD 5 KUALA LUMPUR

HE SAID SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD NOT ONLY HELP CORRECT THE CURRENT IMBALANCED PATTERN OF NEWS FLOW BETWEEN THE DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED COUNTRIES BUT ALSO THE FIRST STEPS TOWARDS THE SETTING-UP OF THE NEW WORLD INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION ORDER.

+IT IS MY HOPE THAT THE TIME WOULD NOT BE TOO LONG FOR US TO SEE ASIA'S IMAGE BEING PAINTED BY ASIANS THEMSELVES RATHER THAN BY OUTSIDERS WHO ARE NEITHER SENSITIVE TO OUR NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS NOR SYMPATHETIC TO OUR CAUSE.

+A JUST AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION WITHIN THE REGION AND OUTSIDE IT WOULD INEVITABLY HELP PROMOTE REGIONAL UNDERSTANDING AND IN THE LONG RUN ENHANCE FURTHER THE CO-OPERATIVE EFFORTS AMONG THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION, + HE SAID. -- BERNAMA 1455/A1