

NO41 (F)
MAHATHIR - FOREIGN

BY REJAL ARBEE AND A. RAHMAN SULAIMAN

KUALA LUMPUR, JULY 15 (BERNAMA) - A SHIFT IN THE FOREIGN POLICY EMPHASIS INTRODUCED BY THE GOVERNMENT A YEAR AGO IS BEGINNING TO SHOW SOME POSITIVE RESULTS, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID HERE TODAY.

IN AN INTERVIEW ON THE EVE OF HIS FIRST ANNIVERSARY IN OFFICE, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID MALAYSIA NOW KNEW +MORE PEOPLE MORE INTIMATELY AND COULD WORK WITH THEM.+

+I THINK BY AND LARGE, THE FOREIGN POLICY THAT WE HAVE MAPPED OUT IS GOOD FOR US BECAUSE IT IS A MUCH MORE POSITIVE POLICY,+ HE CONCLUDED WHEN ASKED FOR HIS ASSESSMENT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE COUNTRY'S FOREIGN POLICY AFTER ONE YEAR AT THE HELM.

UNDER THE NEW EMPHASIS, RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES WERE CONDUCTED ACCORDING TO THEIR ORDER OF PRIORITIES WITH ASEAN COUNTRIES BEING ON THE TOP OF THE LIST.

THIS IS FOLLOWED BY THE ISLAMIC COUNTRIES, THE NON-ALIGNED NATIONS AND THE COMMONWEALTH.

IN ADDITION, GREATER EMPHASIS WAS ALSO BEING MADE ON ESTABLISHING BI-LATERAL RELATIONS WITH NEWLY INDEPENDENT NATIONS SUCH AS THOSE IN THE PACIFICS. - MORE 1222/BW

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HE SAID: +WE FIND THAT BI-LATERAL RELATIONS ENABLE US TO KNOW PEOPLE MORE INTIMATELY, KNOW WHAT ARE THEIR PROBLEMS AND WE CAN WORK WITH THEM WHEREAS THE MULTI-LATERAL APPROACH OF THE PAST HAS NOT BEEN YIELDING THAT KIND OF INTIMACY AND UNDERSTANDING.+

THE PRIME MINISTER STRESSED THAT ALTHOUGH IN REALITY MALAYSIA WAS NOW GIVING PRIORITY ON A MORE MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN TERMS OF INVESTMENT, TRADE, ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND THE LIKE, THE COUNTRY HAD NOT DISCARDED OTHER ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

+WE HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN THE NEED TO SUBSCRIBE TO CERTAIN IDEALS, WORLD IDEALS LIKE THE CONCEPT OF NEUTRALITY AND WHAT HAVE YOU, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, WE FIND THAT WE HAVE TO GET DOWN TO EARTH,+ HE ADDED.

HE DENIED AN ALLEGATION THAT IN CONDUCTING ITS RELATIONS WITH CANADA, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, MALAYSIA TENDED TO GROUP THEM IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS BRITAIN WITH WHICH IT HAD NOT BEEN HAVING GOOD RELATIONS LATELY.

+OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IS BASED ON OUR EXPERIENCE WITH THEM, NOT BASED ON OUR EXPERIENCE WITH BRITAIN,+ HE SAID.

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THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO HIT OUT AT THE UNITED STATES FOR BEING INSENSITIVE TOWARDS MALAYSIA'S CALLS IN RESPECT OF TIN STOCKPILE RELEASES.

+I'VE A FEELING THAT THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF INSENSITIVITY OR EVEN IGNORANCE ABOUT MALAYSIA IN WASHINGTON,+ HE SAID.

+I THINK FOR SOME AMERICAN OFFICIALS, MALAYSIA DOES NOT EXIST AT ALL.+

HOWEVER, THE PRIME MINISTER THOUGHT THAT GENERALLY INDIVIDUAL AMERICANS WERE VERY SYMPATHETIC TOWARDS MALAYSIA.

+I'VE MET A NUMBER OF THEM, SOME OF WHOM CLAIM THAT THEY HAVE DIRECT ACCESS TO THE POWERS THAT BE. BUT I'M YET TO SEE RESULTS,+ HE SAID, INDICATING THAT SOMETHING WAS BEING DONE TO PURSUADE WASHINGTON TO SOFTEN ITS POSITION ON THE MATTER.

ON THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID MALAYSIA WOULD CONTINUE ITS INVOLVEMENT IN THE MOVEMENT AS THE GROUP WAS ALSO IMPORTANT IN ITS OWN WAY.

HOWEVER, HE COULD NOT SAY WHETHER OR NOT HE WOULD ATTEND THE FORTHCOMING NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT TO BE HELD IN BAGHDAD IN SEPTEMBER AS A DECISION WAS YET TO BE MADE. - BERNAMA 1233/BW