

MAHATHIR - POLICY

FROM MERVIN NAMBIAR

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BANGKOK, DEC. 8 (BERNAMA) -- (DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THAT GOOD NEIGHBOURLINESS THROUGH MUTUAL ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION WOULD CONTINUE AS THE CORNERSTONE OF MALAYSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS THAILAND.

+THE PRIORITY THAT WE HAVE MUTUALLY GIVEN TO OUR RELATIONS IS UNQUESTIONABLE; SO TOO OUR NEED FOR EACH OTHER,+ THE PRIME MINISTER DECLARED AT AN OFFICIAL DINNER HOSTED IN HIS HONOUR BY THAI PRIME MINISTER GEN. PREM TINSULANONDA.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR, WHO IS HERE ON A TWO-DAY VISIT, REFERRED TO TALKS HE HAD WITH GEN. PREM THIS AFTERNOON AND SAID THAT THEY HAD SERVED TO CONVINCHE HIM THAT NO ONE COULD DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

+WE HAVE THE FULLEST CONFIDENCE IN ONE ANOTHER'S COMMITMENT TO A POLICY OF MUTUAL RESPECT, CLOSE COOPERATION AND GOOD NEIGHBOURLINESS,+ HE SAID. -- MORE 0008/MB

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DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT IN THE SECURITY FIELD, MALAYSIA WOULD CONTINUE TO GIVE THE HIGHEST PRIORITY TO THE JOINT WAR AGAINST COMMUNIST TERRORISTS ALONG THE MALAYSIA-THAI BORDER WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE GENERAL BORDER COMMITTEE.

AS A CLOSE NEIGHBOUR, MALAYSIA WOULD ALSO STAND BY THAILAND WHICH WAS FACED WITH A DIRECT THREAT TO ITS SECURITY BY EVENTS IN KAMPUCHEA.

+MALAYSIA WILL WORK CLOSELY WITH THAILAND FOR THE PRESERVATION OF PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE REGION,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT VIETNAM'S MILITARY INTERVENTION AND CONTINUED OCCUPATION OF KAMPUCHEA REPRESENTED NOT ONLY A DIRECT INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRY BUT ALSO POSED A THREAT TO THE PEACE AND STABILITY OF THE WHOLE REGION.

-- MORE 0014/MB

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+THE UNRESOLVED SITUATION IN KAMPUCHEA ALSO INVITES AND ENCOURAGES OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE IN A WAY THAT CAN ONLY BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE REGION'S INTEREST.

+IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE ARE MAKING VIGOROUS EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE KAMPUCHEAN PROBLEM SO THAT THE KAMPUCHEAN PEOPLE WILL AGAIN ENJOY DURABLE PEACE AND STABILITY.+

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT MALAYSIA WELCOMED THE FORMATION OF THE COALITION GOVERNMENT OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA HEADED BY PRINCE NORODOM SIHANOUK AND WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OF THE KAMPUCHEAN PROBLEM ON THE BASIS OF THE DECLARATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON KAMPUCHEA AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT MALAYSIA WOULD CONTINUE TO PUSH AHEAD WITH BILATERAL EFFORTS AND PROGRAMMES AIMED AT THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC UPLIFTMENT OF PEOPLES LIVING ALONG THE MALAYSIAN-THAI BORDER. -- MORE 0020/MB

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HE SAID THE AGREEMENT TO JOINTLY EXPLOIT THE CONTINENTAL SHELF IN THE GULF WAS A UNIQUE EXAMPLE OF HOW PROBLEMS BETWEEN NATIONS COULD BE RESOLVED.

+IT SYMBOLISES OUR MATURITY AND GOOD SENSE AND IS PARTICULARLY RELEVANT TODAY WHEN ISSUES OF TERRITORIAL CLAIMS OFTEN CONSTITUTE MAJOR IRRITANTS BETWEEN NATIONS,+ HE SAID.

GEN. PREM SAID HE FULLY ENDORSED THE VARIOUS ON-GOING PROJECTS AND SUPPORTED THE INCREASING COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

HE SAID THE TWO COUNTRIES HAD SUCCESSFULLY UNDERTAKEN COOPERATIVE MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE SECURITY SITUATION AND THE SAFETY OF THAIS AND MALAYSIANS.

+AS FAR AS ECONOMIC COOPERATION IS CONCERNED, OUR TWO COUNTRIES HAVE EMBARKED ON SEVERAL PROJECTS WHICH WOULD IMPROVE THE WELL-BEING OF PEOPLE IN THE BORDER AREAS,+ HE SAID.

GEN. PREM SAID THAT HIS TALKS WITH DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR HAD CONVINCED HIM MORE THAN EVER THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE FIRM BECAUSE THEY WERE ROOTED IN GOODWILL AND MUTUAL TRUST. -- BERNAMA