

MAHATHIR-REETURN

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KUALA LUMPUR, MAY 19 (BERNAMA) -- MALAYSIAN CAN NOW HAVE DIRECT TRADE LINKS WITH YUGOSLAVIA, TURKEY AND ROMANIA WITHOUT GOING THROUGH THIRD PARTIES AS HAD BEEN DONE PREVIOUSLY, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THIS AGREEMENT WAS REACHED FOLLOWING TALKS BETWEEN HIM AND THE LEADERS OF THE THREE BALKAN STATES DURING HIS NINE-DAY VISIT.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS ON HIS RETURN HE SAID THE VISIT WAS A SUCCESS AS IT PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR MALAYSIA, THROUGH BILATERAL TALKS, TO SELL ITS PRODUCTS DIRECT IN LINE WITH EFFORTS TO BALANCE ITS TRADE WITH THE THREE COUNTRIES.

HE SAID THE LEADERS OF THE THREE COUNTRIES ALSO AGREED TO MALAYSIA'S NEW POLICY OF HAVING BARTER OR COUNTER TRADING TO INCREASE TRADE WITH THEM.

+I ALSO WISH TO STRESS HERE THAT MY VISIT WAS NOT SOLELY TO SELL OUR PRODUCTS BUT ALSO TO SEE THEIR MANUFACTURED AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS WHICH WE CAN IMPORT TO STRENGTHEN OUR CONTACTS WITH THEM+, HE ADDED

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HE SAID SEVERAL BUSINESSMEN WHO ACCOMPANIED HIM ON THE VISIT HAD IDENTIFIED THE ITEMS THAT THEY COULD CONDUCT BUSINESS WITH THE THREE COUNTRIES.

FOLLOWING THIS, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID, MALAYSIANS COULD SOON FIND A LOT OF "TURKISH DELIGHTS" ON THEIR TABLES BESIDES BUYING MANUFACTURED GOODS FROM YUGOSLAVIA AND OIL PRODUCTS FROM ROMANIA.

TURKEY IN PARTICULAR, HE SAID, DESPITE HAVING A POPULATION OF 50 MILLION WAS SELF-SUFFICIENT IN FOOD AND ABLE TO EXPORT SOME OF THEIR FOODSTUFF.

"WE HAVE FOR A TIME BEEN EATING TOMATO PASTE FROM TURKEY AND SOON WE CAN ALSO HAVE THEIR SWEETMEATS, DRIED FRUITS, NUTS AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL AND MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS."

YUGOSLAVIA TOO HAD A WIDE SELECTION OF GOODS TO OFFER TO MALAYSIA WHILE FROM ROMANIA, MALAYSIA COULD IMPORT PRODUCTS FROM THEIR OIL INDUSTRIES, DRILLING EQUIPMENT AND PETRO-CHEMICAL PRODUCTS.

"IN FACT, ALL THESE COUNTRIES ARE PREPARED EITHER TO WORK WITH US OR SUPPLY US, TRANSFER THEIR TECHNOLOGIES AND WHATEVER WE DESIRE," HE ADDED. -- MORE 1348/II

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DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID HIS VISIT WAS IN THE INTEREST OF SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION AND IT ENABLED HIM TO HAVE BILATERAL TALKS AND IDENTIFY THE AREAS OF COOPERATION WITH THESE COUNTRIES.

"THROUGH THESE BILATERAL TALKS WE GET TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER BETTER COMPARED TO MULTI-LATERAL TALKS, WHERE I MAKE A STATEMENT AND DISAPPEAR FIVE SECONDS AFTER THAT AND THE SAME GOES FOR EVERY ONE ELSE."

HE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE DISCUSSIONS WITH ALL THE LEADERS HE MET WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS HAVING THE SAME VIEWS AND SUPPORTED MALAYSIA'S STAND ON KAMPUCHEA, AFGHANISTAN, THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE, THE OIL SPILL IN THE GULF STATES, WORLD ECONOMY AND DISARMAMENT.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE LEADERS HE MET WELCOMED MALAYSIA'S HOPE TO HAVE CLOSER CONTACTS WITH THEM AND WERE VERY RESPONSIVE TO MALAYSIA'S VIEWS ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. -- BERNAMA 1350/II

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