

MAHATHIR - RESIDENCE

(EMBARGO: FOR RELEASE AT 5 P.M. JULY 15), 1983

BY REJAL ARBEE AND ABDUL RAHMAN SULAIMAN

<sup>83</sup>  
KUALA LUMPUR, JULY 15 (BERNAMA)-- DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAYS HE IS PREPARED TO GIVE UP THE IDEA OF MOVING INTO THE PRIME MINISTER'S NEW OFFICIAL RESIDENCE HERE IF THE PEOPLE ARE AGAINST IT.

THE RESIDENCE, THE FORMER SRI TIMAH WHICH THE GOVERNMENT BOUGHT FROM THE MALAYSIAN MINING CORPORATION AND IS NOW BEING RENNOVATED, HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF RUMOUR-MONGERING BY SOME CIRCLES WHO CLAIMED THAT A HUGE SUM OF MONEY IS BEING SPENT FOR THE RENOVATION WORK.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IN A SPECIAL INTERVIEW ON THE OCCASION OF HIS SECOND YEAR IN OFFICE HERE: +IF PEOPLE FEEL THAT I SHOULDN'T LIVE IN THAT HOUSE, I'M QUITE WILLING TO CONTINUE STAYING WHERE I'M NOW. IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO MY WORK. I LEAVE IT TO THE PUBLIC, IF THEY FEEL THAT I SHOULDN'T MOVE, I'LL NOT MOVE. IT'S VERY SIMPLE. + HE SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION ON THE MATTER RAISED DURING THE INTERVIEW.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID HE REGRETTED THAT HE AGREED TO THE IDEA IN THE FIRST PLACE, SAYING THAT IF HE KNEW IT WAS GOING TO COST SO MUCH HE WOULD NOT HAVE AGREED AT ALL.  
--MORE 0900/BW

ZCZC N023 (F/S)

MAHATHIR-RESIDENCE 2 KUALA LUMPUR

+I COULD HAVE STAYED AT TUN RAZAK'S HOUSE (SRI TAMAN WHICH HAS BEEN TURNED INTO A MUSEUM). WHEN I DECIDED TO MOVE INTO THIS HOUSE, THE HOUSE WAS JUST STANDING THERE. ALL I NEED WAS TO ADD ONE OR TWO ROOMS.

+UNFORTUNATELY, THE BUILDING WAS SUCH THAT ONCE THEY TOOK OFF THE ROOF, THE WALLS TOO COLLAPSED AND FINALLY THE JKR SAID WE CANNOT ADD ROOMS, THE HOUSE HAD TO BE PULLED DOWN, + HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE RENOVATION WAS MADE ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT BEFORE THE CURRENT ECONOMY DRIVE.

+(THEY SAY) IT MUST BE MADE COMENSURATE WITH THE STATUS OF THE HEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COUNTRY. MY REGRET IS THAT THEY CAN'T BRING THE COST DOWN AND THIS IS SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY HAVE TO PUT UP THE POLICE BARRACKS, THEY HAVE TO PUT IN SERVANT QUARTERS, THEY HAVE TO PUT IN PARKING PLACE FOR GUESTS AND PUBLIC ROOMS FOR THE GUESTS, + HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR DID NOT GIVE THE ACTUAL COST OF THE RENNOVATION BUT DENIED ALLEGATIONS WHICH GIVE THE FIGURE AS CLOSE TO \$80 MILLION. - MORE 0904/BW

ZCZC N024 (F/S)

MAHATHIR-RESIDENCE 3 KUALA LUMPUR

HE SAID: +EVEN IF IT'S LESS THAN \$10 MILLION, I STILL THINK IT'S EXPENSIVE. I DON'T DESERVE TO HAVE A HOUSE LIKE THAT. BUT IT HAS BEEN COMMITTED BECAUSE THEY WANT TO PREPARE THE GROUNDS FOR RECEPTION FOR UP TO 5,000 PEOPLE. THAT'S THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE I ENTERTAIN SOMETIMES, + HE SAID.  
BERNAMA J 0808/BW