

MAHATHIR

FROM EFFENDI A R R I F F I N A N D H A M Z A H S U L A I M A N .

PARIS, JAN. 24 (BERNAMA) -- MALAYSIA HAS ASKED FRANCE TO USE ITS GOOD OFFICE AS A LEADING MEMBER OF THE EEC TO ASSIST MALAYSIA WITH REGARD TO THE PROPOSED IMPOSITION OF CERTAIN TAXES ON MALAYSIAN PRODUCTS BY THE EEC COUNTRIES.

AMONG THEM WAS THE CONSUMPTION TAX ON PALM OIL AND PALM KERNEL OIL WHICH WERE ALREADY SUBJECTED TO 12 PER CENT AND 13 PER CENT IMPORT DUTY BY THE EEC.

THESE WERE AMONG THE TRADE ISSUES BROUGHT UP DURING DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE VISITING MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD AND HIS FRENCH COUNTERPART ENCIK PIERRE MOUROY.

THE TWO LEADERS, WHO MET FOR AN HOUR YESTERDAY WERE LATER JOINED BY THEIR SENIOR OFFICIALS.

A SPOKESMAN OF THE MALAYSIAN DELEGATION TOLD MALAYSIAN JOURNALISTS HERE LAST NIGHT THAT MALAYSIA HAD ALSO SOUGHT FRANCE'S ASSISTANCE TO INCREASE THE DUTY-FREE QUOTA FOR IMPORTS OF MALAYSIAN PLY-WOOD FROM THE PRESENT 78,000 CUBIC METRES BEFORE THE APPLICATION OF THE COMMON EXPORT TAX. -- MORE 1245/11
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THE FRENCH HAD AGREED TO RAISE THE MATTER AT THE EEC LEVELS, ALTHOUGH THEY COULD NOT GIVE ANY COMMITMENT, HE SAID.

IN HIS OPENING REMARKS AT THE EXTENDED MEETING, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SPOKE OF THE IMPROVEMENT IN FRENCH-MALAYSIAN RELATIONS SINCE THE VISIT BY ENCIK MAUROY TO MALAYSIA IN 1982.

THE VISIT HAD SPARKED OFF INTERACTION AMONG THE PEOPLES OF THE TWO COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY BUSINESSMEN.

ENCIK MAUROY IN HIS ADDRESS EXPRESSED SATISFACTION OVER THE RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND FRANCE AND SAID THAT THE VISIT BY DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WOULD STRENGTHEN THAT RELATIONSHIP.

THE FRENCH PREMIER ALSO TOOK NOTE OF MALAYSIA'S ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND PLEDGED THAT FRANCE WOULD ASSIST MALAYSIA AND OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THEIR INDUSTRIALIZATION PROGRAMMES.
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THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT DURING THE DISCUSSIONS, BOTH SIDES ALSO AGREED TO LOOK FURTHER INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF FORMING A JOINT COMMITTEE TO PROMOTE EDUCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR INFORMED THE FRENCH OF MALAYSIA'S KEENNESS TO HAVE MORE FRENCH INVESTORS COMING TO THE COUNTRY.

ON TRADE, WHICH CURRENTLY IS STILL IN FRANCE'S FAVOUR, BOTH SIDES AGREED TO CORRECT THE IMBALANCE.

THE SPOKESMAN ALSO SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD THE MEETING OF MALAYSIA'S PLAN TO HAVE ITS RAILWAYS MODERNIZED AND AT PRESENT THE JAPANESE WAS HELPING IN FEASIBILITY STUDIES.

THE FRENCH PREMIER SAID THEY WOULD ALSO LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF SENDING A DELEGATION TO MALAYSIA FOR SIMILAR STUDIES. -- MORE

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THE MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY NATIONAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER DATUK SANUSI JUNID, FOREIGN MINISTRY SECRETARY-GENERAL TAN SRIZAKARIA ALI, MALAYSIAN AMBASSADOR TAN SRI ABDUL RAHMAN JALAL AND A FEW OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS.,

THE FRENCH SIDE WAS REPRESENTED BY EXTERNAL TRADE MINISTER PUAN EDITH CRESSON, URBAN DEVELOPMENT MINISTER ENCIK PAUL GUILLES AND TWO OTHER CABINET MINISTERS,

EARLIER AT THEIR MEETING, THE PRIME MINISTERS DISCUSSED THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION, EAST-WEST RELATIONS, DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND WEST ASIA.

BEFORE THE MEETING, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS ON SECOND DAY OF HIS OFFICIAL VISIT HERE, ALSO MET WITH 30 LEADING FRENCH BUSINESSMEN AND INDUSTRIALISTS WHERE HE BRIEFED THEM ON MALAYSIA'S INVESTMENT POTENTIAL AND THE COUNTRY'S, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STABILITY. -- BERHAMA 1825/ II