

MAHATHXR-CONTRACTORS

(EMBARGO: FOR RELEASE AT 10.30 P.M. TODAY: APRIL 13)

84  
KUALA LUMPUR, APRIL 13 (BERNAMA--<sup>1</sup>DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TONIGHT TOOK TO TASK MALAYSIANS WHO CRITICISED THE--IN-ROADS MADE BY FOREIGN CONTRACTORS INTO THE NATION'S CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.

THE PRIME MINISTER MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT ANXIOUS TO ENRICH FOREIGNERS, NOR FOR THAT MATTER, OTHER MALAYSIAN COMPANIES AND INSTITUTION.

SPEAKING AT THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS MALAYSIA (IEM) DINNER HELD TO CELEBRATE ITS SILVER JUBILEE AT THE HILTON HERE HE BLAMED THE +COULDN'T CARE LESS ATTITUDE+ OF THOSE INVOLVED IN THE LOCAL CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FOR THE SITUATION.

HE SAID: +WHEN THE NATION'S CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY WAS CONFINED TO MALAYSIANS THERE WAS A COULDN'T-CARE-LESS ATTITUDE. HARDLY ANY CONSTRUCTION WAS FINISHED ON TIME. ONE HIGH RISE BUILDING IN THE CITY TOOK EIGHT YEARS TO COMPLETE.+

+COST OVER-RUNS WAS THE RULE AND A 100 PER CENT INCREASE IN THE FINAL COST WAS NOT UNUSUAL. THERE WAS NO ATTEMPT MADE TO IMPART ON THE JOB TRAINING TO BUMIPUTERAS OR EVEN NON-BUMIPUTERAS.+

HE ADDED THAT EVEN THE GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE TO SEE THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY APPLIED IN PRACTICAL TERMS WAS REJECTED, IGNORED OR BY-PASSED.

-- MORE 1930/AZ

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NO ATTEMPT, HE SAID, WAS ALSO MADE TO ACQUIRE AND APPLY NEW TECHNOLOGY,

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE SITUATION THEN WAS ALSO CHARACTERISED BY +QUITE PRIMITIVE MANAGEMENT+, WITH CONTRACTORS HAVING TOO MANY JOBS TO GIVE PERSONAL AND SUSTAINED ATTENTION TO ANY OF THEIR PROJECTS.

WITH THE ADVENT OF FOREIGN CONTRACTORS HOWEVER NOT ONLY HAD NEW TECHNOLOGY BEEN BROUGHT IN BUT PROJECT MANAGEMENT WAS OF A VERY HIGH ORDER.'

HE SAID DESPITE LANGUAGE AND BUREAUCRATIC DIFFICULTIES, THEY HAD SEEN ABLE TO MEET THEIR OBLIGATIONS AND FREQUENTLY CONSTRUCTION WORK WAS COMPLETED AHEAD OF TIME.

+IN ONE INSTANCE, A SEVEN-YEAR GUARANTEE IS GIVEN FOR ANY STRUCTURAL DEFECTS WHICH MAY SHOW UP. SUCH IS THE IMPACT OF THIS INVASION BY FOREIGN CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES, THEIR MALAYSIAN COUNTERPARTS HAVE BEEN FORCED TO IMPROVE ON THEIR PERFORMANCE,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER EXPRESSED THE HOPE HOWEVER THAT WHAT WAS CURRENTLY HAPPENING WOULD BE TEMPORARY. \*WE HOPE TO SEE MALAYSIAN COMPANIES ACQUIRING THE NECESSARY SKILLS AND ORGANIZATION TO COMPETE WITH FOREIGN COMPANIES.+

- - MORE 1933/AZ

ZCZC N162 (F/S)  
MAHATHIR-CONTRACTORS 3 KUALA LUKLUMPUR (EMBARGO)

THE PRIME MINISTER STRESSED HOWEVER THAT THE IMPROVEMENT OF MALAYSIAN COMPANIES COULD NOT TAKE PLACE OVERNIGHT.

AS A FIRST STEP, HE SUGGESTED THAT THERE SHOULD BE JOINT-VENTURES WITH FOREIGN COMPANIES WHERE MALAYSIAN PARTNERS MUST SHOULDER FULLY THEIR SHARE OF THE RISK AND THE WORK.

+THEY MUST BE AGGRESSIVE IN ORDER TO GET THE KNOW-HOW AND THE TECHNIQUES. EVENTUALLY THERE SHOULD BE PURELY MALAYSIAN COMPANIES WHICH ARE BIG ENOUGH EVEN FOR FULL TURN-KEY PROJECTS.+  
+AND FINALLY MALAYSIAN COMPANIES SHOULD BE ABLE TO GO ABROAD AND COMPETE FOR CONSTRUCTION WORK IN OTHER COUNTRIES INCLUDING THE U.S. AND EUROPE.,+,

CONCEDING THAT THIS MIGHT SOUND LIKE AN +IMPOSSIBLE DREAM+, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID: +ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE IF WE ARE PREPARED TO FACE AND OVERCOME CHALLENGES\*.

HE SAID MALAYSIA HAD TACKLED RUBBER, PALMOIL, AND COCOA -- NONE OF WHICH ARE INDIGENOUS TO THE COUNTRY -- AND HAD BECOME 'THE +GREATEST+ IN THESE FIELDS.

-- MORE 1936/AZ

ZCZC N163 (F/S)

MAHATHIR-CONTRACTORS 4 KUALA LUMPUR (EMBARGO)

+THERE IS NO REASON WHY WE CANNOT TACKLE OTHER FIELDS. BEING SMALL, BUT SET YOUR TARGETS HIGH. WE MAY NOT HIT THE TARGET, NOT IN OUR LIFETIME, BUT WE CAN COME CLOSE TO IT,+ HE SAID.

HE RECALLED THAT WHEN THE MALAYSIAN AIRLINE SYSTEM FIRST WANTED TO FLY TO LONDON! THERE WAS NO SUCH SCEPTICISM AND EVERYONE WANTED IT TO STAY DOMESTIC.

+TODAY MAS IS FLYING FOUR TIMES A WEEK TO LONDON. IT WOULD BE UNTHINKABLE TO HAVE NO MAS SERVICE TO LONDON.

+YET IT WAS ONCE AN IMPOSSIBLE DREAM OR MORE CORRECTLY A FANTASY .+

THE PRIME MINISTER ASSURED THE CONTRACTORS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO PLAY ITS ROLE AND WOULD CONTINUE TO BE SYMPATHETIC.

+WE WILL LISTEN TO YOUR GROUSES AND WE WILL ACT WHERE NECESSARY.

HE REMINDED HOWEVER THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT APPEARED TO BE ACTING AGAINST THEIR INTEREST, THEY SHOULD REMEMBER THAT IT WAS NOT FROM ANY DESIRE TO BEGIN CHARITY ABROAD.

-- MORE 1939/AZ

MAHATHIR-CONTRACTORS 5 KUALA LUMPUR (EMBARGO)

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR STRESSED THAT IT WAS SOMETIMES NECESSARY FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND THE LEADERSHIP TO JOLT THE PEOPLE OUT OF THEIR COMPLACENCY AND SMUG SELF-SATISFACTION.

UNPOPULAR TOUGH IT MIGHT BE, THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, MUST OFF-AND-ON APPLY THE SHOCK TREATMENT.

IN HIS SPEECH, IEM'S PRESIDENT ENCIK PANG LEONG HOON HAS SUGGESTED THE FORMATION OF A THINK-TANK WITHIN THE INSTITUTION.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT COULD MAKE USE OF THESE EXPERTS TO OBTAIN TECHNICAL ADVICE ON DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

ENCIK PANG, WHO IS ALSO THE DID DIRECTOR-GENERAL? SAID THAT THE IEM WITH A MEMBERSHIP OF MORE THAN 6,000 HAD MANY EXPERTS IN VARIOUS SPECIALISED ENGINEERING FIELD.

HE SAID IEM SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT'S LOOK EAST POLICY, ITS PRIVATISATION AND MALAYSIA INCORPORATED CONCEPTS AND URGED MEMBERS TO WORK FOR THEIR SUCCESS.

-- BERNAMA 1947/AZ