

**BERNAMA FEATURE FOR PUBLICATION ON OR AFTER SEPT. 1**

A TWO-PART ANALYSIS ON THE OUTCOME OF THE RECENT VISITS BY PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

30/8/84

PART TWO - THE VISITS, THE MONEY SPENT AND THE SUBSTANCE BY ABDUL RAHMAN SULAIMAN

WHEN A PRIME MINISTER GOES ABROAD ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT, HE BRINGS ALONG WITH HIM A SIZEABLE ENTOURAGE COMPRISING OFFICIALS AND PERSONAL AIDES TO ASSIST HIM IN CARRYING OUT HIS DUTIES. DEPENDING ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VISIT, HE MAY ALSO CHOSE TO TAKE WITH HIM HIS MINISTERS.

NORMALLY, IF THE VISIT IS AT THE INVITATION OF THE 'HOST GOVERNMENT, THE PRIME MINISTER AND OTHER SENIOR MEMBERS OF HIS DELEGATION ARE ACCORDED A GUEST STATUS. IN SUCH A CASE, THEIR EXPENSES WILL BE BORNE BY THE HOST GOVERNMENT. OTHERWISE, THEY WILL HAVE TO PAY THEIR OWN.

THE MONEY SPENT FOR SUCH A TRIP MUST BE QUITE SUBSTANTIAL TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE AIRFARES, LODGING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES AND SCORES OF OTHER INCIDENTAL EXPENSES INCURRED BY THE OFFICIALS, THE AIDES AND THE REST.

- MORE.  
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VISITS 2 (FEATURE)

IT MUST HAVE BEEN ON THE BASIS OF THIS CALCULATION THAT DOUBTS ARE OF LATE BEING RAISED BY CERTAIN QUARTERS -- EITHER EXPLICITLY OR OTHERWISE -- ON THE USEFULNESS OF SUCH TRIPS BY GOVERNMENT LEADERS.

THE RECENT TRIP BY DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND WAS ALSO NOT SPARED FROM SUCH A CRITICISM.

THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF, WHEN ASKED ABOUT THIS DURING THE COURSE OF THE VISITS, MERELY SAID: 'IT'S UP TO YOU TO JUDGE.'

THERE ARE OF COURSE TWO WAYS OF LOOKING AT SUCH TRIPS. FIRST IS TO MERELY UNDERTAKE A SIMPLE MATHEMATICAL CALCULATION ON THE TOTAL EXPENSES INCURRED AND BALANCE THE SUM WITH SUPPOSEDLY TANGIBLE RESULTS ACHIEVED BY THE VISIT IN QUESTION, ASSUMING THAT THE SO-CALLED 'TANGIBLE RESULTS' COULD BE QUANTIFIED IN TERMS OF RINGGIT AND SEN.

THE OTHER WAY IS TO LOOK AT THE PROJECTED LONG-TERM BENEFITS PRESUMABLY GENERATED BY THE VISIT, SUBJECT OF, COURSE TO THE CONDITION THAT MAXIMUM EFFORTS ARE PUT TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED OBJECTIVE OR OBJECTIVES OF THE TRIP.

IN APPLYING THE SECOND CRITERION, AN ASSUMPTION SHOULD BE MADE TO THE EFFECT THAT, THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS MONEY CANNOT BUY. HAVING DONE SO, AN ALLOWANCE COULD ALSO BE MADE TO MEASURE THE SERIOUSNESS BY WHICH AN INDIVIDUAL GOVERNMENT LEADER REGARDS THE VISIT. -- MORE.

VISITS 3 (FEATURE)

IN THIS CONNECTION, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR'S SERIOUSNESS IS SOMETHING WHICH COULD NOT BE DISPUTED. THOSE WHO HAVE NOT HAD THE OPPORTUNITY OF SEEING HIM PERFORMS ABROAD MAY HAVE SOME RESERVATION ON THIS.

HOWEVER, AFTER WITNESSING THE PRIME MINISTER IN ACTION TIME AND AGAIN, ONE COULD NOT HELP BUT TO BE CONVINCED THAT THE OVERSEAS TRIPS THAT HE HAD MADE AND WILL BE MAKING IN FUTURE ARE MORE THAN JUSTIFIED.

THIS ALSO APPLIES TO HIS RECENT VISITS TO THE THREE PACIFIC NATIONS. A NOTICEABLE QUALITY IN HIM IS HIS ON HAVING A TIGHT SCHEDULE TO TAKE EVERY POSSIBLE ADVANTAGE OF HIS STAY.

OFFICIALS AGREE THAT IT IS ALSO DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR'S STYLE TO DO AWAY WITH FORMALITIES DURING NEGOTIATIONS IN PREFERENCE INSTEAD FOR A MORE DOWN-TO-EARTH AND BUSINESSLIKE APPROACH.

THE RETURNS IN A WAY ARE SUBSTANTIAL. IN TERMS OF SUBSTANCE ALONG WITH PUTTING ASIDE SUCH INTANGIBLE THINGS AS WINNING FRIENDSHIP OR ESTABLISHING BETTER RAPPORT, THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISITS TO THE THREE COUNTRIES HAD RESULTED IN: - → MORE.

THE SIGNING OF A TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH PAPUA NEW GUINEA, THEREBY GIVING A NEW DIMENSION IN MALAYSIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE DEVELOPING SOUTH PACIFIC COUNTRY.

AN INVITATION FROM PNG FOR MALAYSIAN BUSINESSMEN TO INVEST THERE,

PARTICULARLY IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY -- MORE ITEM NOT STORED  
-BAD HEADER  
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VISITS 4 (FEATURE)

AN ASSURANCE BY AUSTRALIA THAT IT WILL NOT TAKE ANY UNILATERAL MOVE

THAT MIGHT AFFECT MALAYSIA IN MATTERS CONCERNING EDUCATION= A SYMPATHETIC HEARING BY AUSTRALIAN LEADERS ON THE PLIGHT OF MALAYSIAN STUDENTS THERE IN THE EVENT THAT CANBERRA DECIDES TO INCREASE

TUITION FEES=

AN AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE WITH AUSTRALIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A

JOINT COMMITTEE ON TRADE TO ENHANCE ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN THE

TWO COUNTRIES=

AN ASSURANCE BY AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER BOB HAWKE TO TAKE MEASURES

TO IMPROVE THE CURRENCY TWO-WAY TRADE WHOSE BALANCE IS HEAVILY IN AUSTRALIA'S FAVOUR=

A SIMILAR UNDERTAKING BY NEW ZEALAND'S PRIME MINISTER ENCIK DAVID

LANGE, AND

A PLEDGE BY NEW ZEALAND TO CONTINUE PROVIDING PLACES IN ITS UNIVERSITIES FOR MALAYSIAN STUDENTS.

THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH PNG IS THE FIRST TO HAVE BEEN SIGNED WITH ANY DEVELOPING COUNTRY SINCE MALAYSIA LAUNCHED ITS TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME IN 1980.

OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION INCLUDING VANUATU, TUVALU, FIJI AND WESTERN SAMOA HAVE ALSO EXPRESSED THEIR DESIRE TO ENTER INTO SUCH AN AGREEMENT WITH MALAYSIA. -- MORE

VISITS 5 (FEATURE)

IN THE CASE OF NZ'S ASSURANCE OF PLACES FOR MALAYSIAN STUDENTS, IT ONLY APPLIES TO THOSE WISHING TO PURSUE LESS TRADITIONAL COURSES SUCH AS AGRICULTURE AND FOOD TECHNOLOGY.

IT WAS EXPLAINED AND MALAYSIA ACCEPTED THAT WELLINGTON WILL BE IN NO POSITION TO GUARANTEE PLACES FOR PROFESSIONAL COURSES SUCH AS ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE. AS INCIDENTALLY THESE ARE ALSO COURSES ON GREAT DEMAND BY THE NEW ZEALANDERS THEMSELVES.

THAT BEING THE CASE, THE LIST OF 'GAINS' OBTAINED BY MALAYSIA FROM THE VISITS IS STILL SUBSTANTIAL IN RELATIVE TERMS.

QUITE APART FROM THIS, THERE ARE OTHER BENEFITS, SUCH AS THE STRENGTHENING OF PERSONAL CONTACTS BETWEEN DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR AND LEADERS OF THE COUNTRIES VISITED.

IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MODERN-DAY DIPLOMACY, THIS IS REGARDED AS VERY IMPORTANT. THIS IS ESPECIALLY SO AS MORE AND MORE EMPHASIS ARE NOW BEING LAID ON HAND-CARRIED MESSAGES, IN THE CONDUCT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS WHICH IS A 'MARKED DEPARTURE' FROM THE 'HOT-LINE' TECHNIQUE WIDELY TALKED ABOUT DURING THE POST-COLD WAR YEARS. --- MORE.

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VISITS 6 (FEATURE)

MALAYSIA CERTAINLY DOES NOT WANT TO BE LEFT BEHIND IN THE RACE FOR FRIENDSHIP.

AS DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR HIMSELF PUTS IT: 'IT'S OUR DESIRE TO WIN AS MANY FRIENDS AS POSSIBLE BECAUSE THERE WILL BE A TIME WHEN WE NEED THEM. REMEMBER DURING THE INDONESIAN CONFRONTATION WHEN WE WERE LEFT WITHOUT FRIENDS IN THE UNITED NATIONS? THAT WAS BECAUSE WE RELIED TOO MUCH ON OUR TRADITIONAL FRIENDS.'

THIS IS DEFINATELY SOMETHING MONEY CANNOT BUY. -- BERNAMA.