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MAHATHIR-JAPAN a' 8'8'
FROM REJAL ARBEE

TOKYO, OCT. 15 (BERNAMA) -- MALAYSIA HAS NO INTENTION OF ABANDONING ITS +LOOK EAST+ POLICY DESPITE THE STRONG CRITICISM MADE BY PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIRMOHAMAD AGAINST JAPAN AND THE WAY THE RELATIONSHIP IS DEVELOPING.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID: +WE WILL CONTINUE WITH THE POLICY AS IT IS BENEFICIAL+.

HE SAID THIS IN AN INTERVIEW WITH BERNAMA FOLLOWING UNOFFICIAL TALKS WITH JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER YASUHIRO NAKASONE AT HIS OFFICIAL RESIDENCE HERE THIS AFTERNOON.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WITH ENCIK NAKASONE WHO HAD PLEDGED TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO CORRECT THE IMBALANCES IN THE RELATIONSHIP.

THE MEETING IS THEIR FIRST FOLLOWING DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR'S STRONG CRITICISM AGAINST JAPAN WHEN OPENING THE MALAYSIA-JAPAN COLLOQUIUM IN KUALA LUMPUR IN AUGUST.

JAPANESE CIRCLES HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN FOLLOWING THE CRITICISM AND ESPECIALLY DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR'S DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP AS CONFORMING TO THE +CLASSIC PATTERN OF ECONOMIC COLONIALISM+.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT ENCIK NAKASONE WAS ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP AND +I EXPLAINED TO HIM NOT TO PLACE TOO MUCH SIGNIFICANCE ON THE SPEECH+.

+IT WAS MADE IN AN ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT AND YOU SAY WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY.

+THERE WAS A DIFFERENCE OF PERSPECTIVE BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND JAPAN WHICH HAD TO BE CORRECTED AND I WAS MAKING SURE THAT THE PARTIES ARE AWARE OF THIS+.

+I KNOW A LOT OF JAPANESE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SPEECH, THAT IS THEIR NATURE.

+BUT AT HOME A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE PLAYED UP THE SPEECH IN ORDER TO REVERSE THE POLICY.

+THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO INTENTION WHATSOEVER TO REVERSE THE POLICY. WE WILL CONTINUE WITH IT AS IT IS BENEFICIAL.

+ALL THOSE CAPITALISING (ON THE SPEECH) IN ORDER TO UNDERMINE THE POLICY WILL NOT SUCCEED+.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT ENCIK NAKASONE HAD AGREED THAT WHATEVER POSSIBLE THAT COULD BE DONE TO CORRECT THE IMBALANCES IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND JAPAN WOULD BE DONE.

HE SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED WITH ENCIK NAKASONE WAYS AND MEANS TO CORRECT THE IMBALANCES, INCLUDING THE TRADE DEFICIT FACED BY MALAYSIA AND THE OPENING UP OF JAPANESE MARKETS TO MALAYSIA'S MANUFACTURED GOODS.

+HE HAS NOTED THIS AND I BELIEVE ACTION WILL BE TAKEN+.

HE SAID THERE WERE SEVERAL LINES THAT COULD BE TAKEN, FOR EXAMPLE, THE MANUFACTURE OF CERTAIN GOODS IN MALAYSIA FOR RE-EXPORT TO JAPAN AND A NUMBER OF OTHER MEASURES, WHICH HE DECLINED TO ELABORATE.

+I NEED NOT MENTION THESE THINGS NOW AS I LIKE TO SEE THEM HAPPEN FIRST, RATHER THAN RAISE EXPECTATIONS AND SAY LATER SAY THIS IS DONE AND THIS IS NOT DONE+.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR, WHO WAS HERE SINCE SATURDAY ON A PRIVATE VISIT, WILL RETURN HOME TOMORROW.

HE HAS BEEN AWAY SINCE LATE SEPTEMBER, MAKING AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO ITALY AND LATER ADDRESSING THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY -- BERNAMA.

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