

R E 718 AAE
MAHATHIR-COMMITTEE
BY AHMAD REJAL. ARBEE

CAIRO, DEC 15 (BERNAMA) -- A JOINT COMMITTEE IS TO BE ESTABLISHED TO OVERSEE AND IMPROVE BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND EGYPT, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID YESTERDAY.

THE SETTING UP OF THE COMMITTEE PROVIDED FOR IN THE THREE BASIC AGREEMENTS ALREADY SIGNED BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES IN 1977 WAS AGREED AT A MEETING HERE ON WEDNESDAY BETWEEN OFFICIALS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES HEADED BY THEIR PRIME MINISTERS DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR AND ENCIK KAMAL HASSAN ALY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE AT THE HELIOPOLIS SHERATON WHERE HE IS STAYING THAT HIS VISIT TO EGYPT HAD BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL.

HE LEFT FOR BAMAKO, MALI TODAY TO BEGIN HIS THIRD LEG OF HIS CURRENT THREE NATION TOUR OF AFRICA.

HE SAID THAT RESPONSE OF THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT TO THE VARIOUS MALAYSIAN SUGGESTIONS ON STRONGER BILATERAL RELATIONS HAD BEEN VERY POSITIVE.

+WE HAVE IDENTIFIED VARIOUS ASPECTS OF COOPERATION. IN THE BUSINESSFIELD FOR EXAMPLE AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED TO ESTABLISH DOWNSTREAM ACTIVITIES OF THE PALM OIL INDUSTRY HERE.+

HE SAID THAT THERE HAD ALSO BEEN EXTENSIVE TALKS ON COOPERATION BETWEEN MALAYSIAN AND EGYPTIAN BUSINESSMEN. +I BELIEVE SOMETHING IS IN THE PIPELINE,+ HE SAID.

A GROUP OF MALAYSIAN BUSINESSMEN WERE HERE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITIES OF ENHANCING BUSINESS TIES BETWEEN THEM INCLUDING PURCHASES OF GOODS AND INVESTMENT.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT MALAYSIA WAS ALSO LOOKING INTO THE POSSIBILITIES OF LOCATING DEPOTS OF VARIOUS MALAYSIAN PRODUCE IN EGYPT FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THE REGION TO BE MANAGED BY MALAYSIAN-EGYPTIAN JOINT VENTURES.

HE SAID HE HAD ALSO SUGGESTED EGYPTIAN BUSINESSMEN HOLD AN +EGYPT WEEK+ IN MALAYSIA TO MAKE KNOWN THEIR PRODUCTS TO MALAYSIANS AND THE MALAYSIAN MARKET.-

+SO FAR WE KNOW EGYPT ONLY AS A CENTRE OF LEARNING FOR ISLAM AND NOT AS HAVING INDUSTRIES PRODUCING QUITE A LOT OF OUR REQUIREMENTS.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WAS ASKED WHETHER HE BROUGHT ANY MESSAGE FROM LIBYAN PRESIDENT MUAMMAR GADDAFI TO EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT HOSENI MOBARAK CONSIDERING THAT HE HAD COME TO EGYPT AFTER VISITING LIBYA.

HE WAS ALSO ASKED WHETHER HE DISCUSSED LIBYA-EGYPT RELATIONS DURING HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MOBARAK.

(LIBYA HAS BROKEN OFF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH EGYPT FOLLOWING THE SIGNING OF THE CAMP DAVID ACCORD BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL).

DATUK SERI DA MAHATHIR SAID HE HAD NOT BROUGHT ANY MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT GADDAFI AND NEITHER DID HE DISCUSS EGYPT-LIBYA RELATIONS.--

HE SAID MALAYSIA'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES WERE ON A BILATERAL BASIS.

HE WAS ASKED A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION AND THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION. HE EXPLAINED THE MALAYSIAN POSITION.

HE ALSO MENTIONED THE EFFORTS BY MALAYSIA IN SUCCESSFULLY GETTING EGYPT BACK INTO THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC).

MALAYSIA FELT THAT EGYPT WAS A STRONG FORCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND AS THE BIGGEST ARAB NATION IT SHOULD BE CLOSE WITH OTHER ARAB NATIONS AS WELL AS OTHER ISLAMIC COUNTRIES.

ASKED HIS OPINION OF THE RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH JORDAN AND THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO), HE SAID ANYTHING THAT BROUGHT ISLAMIC COUNTRIES OR ENTITIES TOGETHER WAS GOOD.

HE SAID HE HAD EXTENDED INVITATIONS TO BOTH PRESIDENT MOBARAK AND PRIME MINISTER KAMAL HASSAN ALI TO VISIT MALAYSIA AND HOPED ONE OF THEM COULD MAKE THE VISIT NEXT YEAR.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR EARLIER SAID HIS FRIDAY PRAYERS AT THE AL-AZHAR MOSQUE FOLLOWED BY LUNCH HOSTED BY THE EGYPTIAN/MALAYSIAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY AT THE GEZIRA SHERATON.--BERNAMA.

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