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MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, MARCH 11 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY UNDERLINED THE NEED TO GIVE THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANISATION (PLO) ITS RIGHT TO PLAY THE CENTRAL ROLE IN ANY NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION.

HE ALSO SPOKE OF THE NEED TO INFLUENCE AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION AS PART OF EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT A SOLUTION TO THE PROTRACTED ISSUE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THIS DURING HIS TWO-HOUR DISCUSSIONS WITH HIS -YUGOSLAV COUNTERPART, PUAN MILKA PLANINC, AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE HERE.

BRIEFING NEWSMEN AFTER THE MEETING, FOREIGN MINISTRY SECRETARY-GENERAL TAN SRI ZAINAL ABIDIN SULONG SAID THE TWO LEADERS TOUCHED ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE, DISARMAMENT, ANTARCTICA, THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND THE KAMPUCHEAN PROBLEM, BESIDES BILATERAL RELATIONS.

ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE, HE SAID DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR STRESSED THAT PLO LEADER YASSER ARAFAT HAD ALREADY SHOWN ENOUGH FLEXIBILITY TOWARDS ACHIEVING A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM.

HOWEVER, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR CAUTIONED THAT THIS FLEXIBILITY BY ENCIK ARAFAT MUST NOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED BUT MUST BE USED TO EXPEDITE EFFORTS TO SOLVE THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE. -- MORE  
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MAHATHIR 2 KUALA LUMPUR

HE SAID ENCIK ARAFAT WOULD LOSE HIS CREDIBILITY AS THE PLO LEADER IF EFFORTS TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE ON A FOUR-DAY VISIT HERE TO RECIPROCATE THE VISIT OF DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR TO BELGRADE IN MAY 1983.

THE YUGOSLAV PRIME MINISTER IS ON A FOUR-DAY VISIT HERE TO RECIPROCATE THE VISIT OF DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR TO BELGRADE IN MAY 1983.

ON THE ANTARCTICA ISSUE, TAN SRI ZAINAL ABIDIN SAID PUAN PLANINC STRESSED THAT THE MATTER SHOULD BE GIVEN GREATER EMPHASIS IN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT.

+WE SHALL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT YOU AND WE SHALL NOT GIVE UP BUT PERSEVERE...WE SHOULD DO MORE ABOUT THIS IN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT,+ SHE WAS QUOTED AS SAYING.

ON DISARMAMENT, NEGOTIATIONS ON WHICH ARE ONGOING IN GENEVA, TAN SRI ZAINAL ABIDIN SAID PUAN PLANINC STRESSED THAT THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT MEMBER COUNTRIES SHOULD VOICE OUT THEIR RESPECTIVE AND COLLECTIVE VIEWS AS +WE TOO HAVE A SAY IN THIS.+ -- MORE  
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U ED82 AAE  
MAHATHIR 3 KUALA LUMPUR

TAN SRI ZAINAL ABIDIN SAID DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WAS IN AGREEMENT WITH THE VIEWS EXPRESSED AND SAID THAT MALAYSIA WAS GLAD THERE WAS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THIS RESPECT BETWEEN THE SUPERPOWERS -- THE UNITED STATES AND RUSSIA.

HOWEVER, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR EXPRESSED CONCERN WITH THE MASSIVE EXPENDITURE ON THE ARMS BUILDUP AS THIS HAD DRAINED RESOURCES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

HE ALSO BRIEFED HIS COUNTERPART ON DEVELOPMENTS ON THE KAMPUCHEAN ISSUE, PARTICULARLY THE LATEST VIETNAMESE INCURSIONS INTO THAILAND.

TAN SRI ZAINAL ABIDIN SAID DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR POINTED OUT THAT VIETNAM WAS TRYING TO PROVE THAT IT COULD ACHIEVE A MILITARY SOLUTION TO THE KAMPUCHEAN PROBLEM IN THE BELIEF THAT IT WAS SUPERIOR MILITARILY.-- MORE  
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MAHATHIR 4 KUALA LUMPUR

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID VIETNAM DID NOT EVEN HESITATE CROSSING INTO THAILAND AS WAS ILLUSTRATED BY EVENTS IN THE LAST FEW DAYS, AND ADDED THAT IT WAS OBVIOUS VIETNAM WAS NOT TELLING THE TRUTH WHEN IT SAID NONE OF ITS TROOPS WERE ON THAI TERRITORY.

TAN SRI ZAINAL ABIDIN QUOTED THE PRIME MINISTER AS SAYING THAT THE THREAT TO THAILAND WAS REAL AND THAT HE CONSIDERED THE THREAT TO THAILAND AS A THREAT TO MALAYSIA.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID ASEAN HAD TO STAND FIRM ON THE KAMPUCHEAN ISSUE AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT SUPPORT FOR THE UN-RECOGNISED COALITION GOVERNMENT OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA (CGDK) WOULD CONTINUE.

IT WAS CLEAR TO THE PRIME MINISTER THAT THE INTRUSIONS INTO THAILAND AND WHAT WAS GOING ON IN KAMPUCHEA WAS PROOF THAT VIETNAM WAS STILL PERSISTING IN DISREGARDING WORLD OPINION.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT YUGOSLAVIA WOULD CONTINUE HELPING TO STRENGTHEN WORLD SUPPORT FOR THE CGDK. -- MORE  
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MAHATHIR 5 KUALA LUMPUR

PUAN PLANINC SAID THAT YUGOSLAVIA WAS CLOSE TO ASEAN AND WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER WITH THE REGIONAL GROUPING.

TAN SRI ZAINAL ABIDIN SAID THAT THE TWO PRIME MINISTERS ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE SHOULD BE CLOSER SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION WHILE EFFORTS MUST CONTINUE TO BRING ABOUT THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE WHICH HAD SO FAR RECEIVED POOR RESPONSE FROM THE DEVELOPED NATIONS.

ON MALAYSIA-YUGOSLAVIA RELATIONS, TAN SRI ZAINAL ABIDIN SAID DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR NOTED THAT SINCE HIS VISIT TO BELGRADE THERE HAD BEEN A LOT OF ACTIVITIES AND HOPED THIS WOULD CONTINUE FOLLOWING PUAN PLANINC'S VISIT HERE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT MALAYSIA LOOKED FORWARD TO INCREASED COOPERATION IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERDEPENDENCE AND SAW YUGOSLAVIA AS A NON-TRADITIONAL TRADING PARTNER WITH VAST POTENTIAL.

THE TWO PRIME MINISTERS ALSO SAW THE NEED TO EXPAND TRADE. --  
MORE

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MAHATHIR-6 KUALA LUMPUR

TAN SRI ZAINAL ABIDIN SAID THAT TRADE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER TENGKU RAZALEIGH HAMZAH ALSO BRIEFED THE PRIME MINISTERS ON THE OUTCOME OF THE RECENT MALAYSIA-YUGOSLAVIA JOINT-COMMISSION MEETING WHICH HE CHAIRED.

TENGKU RAZALEIGH MENTIONED THE SMALL PERCENTAGE OF TRADE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND STRESSED THE NEED TO STEP IT UP.

BOTH PRIME MINISTERS REGARDED COUNTER-TRADING AS A GOOD INSTRUMENT FOR SUCH PURPOSE. -- BERNAMA

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