

MAHATHIR-REGIONAL

EMBARGO: FOR RELEASE AT 12.30 PM TODAY.

FROM MUSA SCULLY 85

① Trip Overseas

BEIJING, NOV 22) (BERNAMA) -- MALAYSIA TODAY CALLED ON CHINA FOR A GREATER JOINT EFFORT TOWARDS REGIONAL COOPERATION -- THE ONLY REALISTIC OPTION TO ESTABLISH A PEACEFUL, STABLE AND PROGRESSIVE REGION.

IN INVITING CHINA TO JOIN MALAYSIA IN TAKING THE STEP TOWARDS THE BEST GUARANTEE FOR PROGRESS, PROSPERITY AND SECURITY, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID, +THE ROAD TO GENUINE REGIONAL COOPERATION IS ADMITTEDLY A LONG ONE BUT AS YOUR GREAT SAGE ONCE SAID, A JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND BEGINS WITH THE FIRST STEP+.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS ON THE THIRD DAY OF HIS NINE-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT, WAS ADDRESSING STUDENTS AT THE PRESTIGIOUS QUING HUA UNIVERSITY IN BEIJING.

ADMITTING THAT MALAYSIA'S RELATIONS WITH CHINA HAD NOT BEEN ENTIRELY FREE OF PROBLEMS, HE SAID ONLY THROUGH REGIONAL COOPERATION COULD BOTH COUNTRIES +HARMONISE OUR MANY INTERESTS AND MINIMISE OUR MANY DIFFERENCES+.

-- MORE

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HE SAID THERE WERE OBSTACLES -- PROTECTIONISM, UNFAIR TRADING PRACTICES, POLITICAL BULLYING AND INTERFERENCE IN AFFAIRS OF OTHERS -- STANDING IN THE WAY TOWARDS THIS REALISATION.

+REGIONAL COOPERATION WILL NOT COME ABOUT IF WE ALLOW OURSELVES THE LUXURY TO DREAM OF IT OR MERELY PAY LIP-SERVICE TO IT+.

IN A LENGTHY SPEECH WHERE HE OUTLINED +A MALAYSIAN PERSPECTIVE OF HOW CHINA COULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A PEACEFUL, STABLE AND DYNAMIC REGION+, HE SAID FOR A START BOTH COUNTRIES COULD WORK SERIOUSLY TOWARDS THE FIGHT FOR A MORE EQUITABLE ECONOMIC ORDER -- OR PUT +ECONOMICS IN COMMAND+.

HE OUTLINED SEVERAL AREAS WHERE BOTH COUNTRIES COULD WORK TOGETHER FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE REGION NAMELY:

+THAT MALAYSIA AND CHINA COORDINATE THE EXPORT OF COMMON PRIMARY COMMODITIES LIKE TIN, -- MORE

+COMPETITION FROM CHINA IN AREAS LIKE TEXTILES, ELECTRONIC GOODS AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE IN THE BASIS OF EQUITABLE AND FAIR GROUND RULES;

+TO DEVELOP DIRECT TRADE -- THE ABSENCE OF WHICH RESULTS IN UNDER-UTILIZATION OF PORTS AND HIGHER RETAIL PRICES FOR MALAYSIAN CONSUMERS;

TO CONSIDER GREATER EXPORT OF +VALUE ADDED GOODS+ TO CHINA -- IF CHINA HAS LESS NEED FOR PRIMARY COMMODITIES;

+TO POOL INSURANCE (FREIGHT) SERVICES -- CHINA WITH ITS EXPANDING MERCHANT FLEET COULD ASSIST IN TRANSPORTION AT FAIR PRICES.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE STRENGTHENING OF BILATERAL TRADE AND EXPANSION OF THE RANGE OF GOODS AND SERVICES +AMONG OURSELVES+ WAS NOT FOR MALAYSIA ALONE -- IT WAS FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE REGION.

HE SAID, +THIS TREND TOWARDS GREATER COMPETITION BETWEEN CHINA AND OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IS INEVITABLE. THE OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES MUST LEARN TO LIVE WITH IT. -- MORE (END OF CORRECTED REPETITION)

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+BUT, 'NEVERTHELESS' SUCH COMPETITION MUST UNFOLD ON THE BASIS OF
EQUITABLE AND FAIR GROUND RULES+, HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MANY COUNTRIES IN THE REGION
INCLUDING MALAYSIA WERE SYMPATHETIC TO CHINA'S MODERNISATION EFFORTS
BUT THERE WAS A FEELING OF UNCERTAINTY WITH REGARD THE IMPACT CHINA
WOULD HAVE ON THE REGION.

IN WELCOMING THE ASSURANCES OF THE CHINESE LEADERS THAT CHINA
WOULD NEVER SEEK HEGEMONY OR DO ANYTHING TO HARM COUNTRIES IN THE
REGION, HE SAID HOWEVER THAT +TRUST DOES NOT COME EASILY TO US IN
VIEW OF OUR PAST EXPERIENCES.+

+I ASK YOU TO REMEMBER THAT HISTORICALLY SMALL COUNTRIES ON THE
PERIPHERIES OF A BIG AND POWERFUL STATE HAVE ALWAYS HAD REASON TO BE
WARY,+ HE SAID. -- BERNAMA

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