

0103

R ED66 AAE
COMMONWEALTH
EMBARGO: FOR USE AFTER 10 TONIGHT
BM

KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT 24⁸⁶ (BERNAMA) -- MALAYSIA IS NOT THE ONLY COUNTRY TO HAVE QUESTIONED THE BENEFITS OF ITS CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMONWEALTH; A PANEL DISCUSSION HEARD TONIGHT. SEVERAL OTHER COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES HAD ALSO RAISED THE QUESTION, NEW STRAITS TIMES GROUP EDITORIAL ADVISER HAJI ABDUL SAMAD ISMAIL SAID.

AS SUCH, WHEN PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID MALAYSIA WOULD REVIEW ITS PARTICIPATION IN THE GROUPING HIS WAS NOT A LONE OR ISOLATED VOICE, HAJI ABDUL SAMAD SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HAD IN HIS POLICY ADDRESS AT THE UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY LAST WEEK SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE COUNTRY'S PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH IN TERMS OF THE BENEFITS IT WAS GETTING.

HAJI ABDUL SAMAD WAS SPEAKING DURING THE +EHWAL SEMASA+ PROGRAMME OVER RTM. THE OTHER PANEL MEMBERS WERE UNIVERSITI KEBANGSAAN MALAYSIA HISTORY LECTURERS DR PAMELA SODHY AND DR KOBKUA SUWANNATHAT PIAN. -- MORE
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R ED67 AAE
COMMONWEALTH 2 KUALA LUMPUR (EMBARGO)

HAJI ABDUL SAMAD SAID SEVERAL OTHER COMMONWEALTH MEMBERS HAD QUESTIONED THE USEFULNESS OF REMAINING IN THE ORGANISATION AS THEY CLAIMED BRITISH PRIME MINISTER MARGARET THATCHER SEEMED TO BE CLOSER TO US PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN THAN ANY COMMONWEALTH HEAD ON SANCTIONS AGAINST THE RACIST PRETORIA REGIME.

HE SAID QUEEN ELIZABETH II HERSELF WAS UNEASY WITH PUAN THATCHER'S POLICY REGARDING SOUTH AFRICA.

DR SODHY SAID IF MALAYSIA WERE TO LEAVE THE COMMONWEALTH IT WOULD SHOW THAT THE COUNTRY WISHED TO BE MORE SELF-RELIANT INSTEAD OF BEING DEPENDENT IN THE PAST.

SHE SAID THAT AFTER 30 YEARS OF BEING INDEPENDENT, MALAYSIA WAS ON A HISTORIC THRESHOLD.

+AMONG THE THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES, MALAYSIA IS RESPECTED FOR CHAMPIONING THEIR RIGHTS IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD, FOR ITS ANTI-APARTHEID STAND AND THE QUESTION OF DRUGS,+ SHE SAID. -- MORE
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R E072 AAE
COMMONWEALTH 3 KUALA LUMPUR (EMBARGO)

ON THE WORLD'S VIEW OF MALAYSIA, HAJI ABDUL SAMAD SAID THIS DEPENDED ON A PARTICULAR COUNTRY'S MOTIVE.

MALAYSIA'S ANTI-APARTHEID STANCE AND ITS SUPPORT FOR THE PALESTINIANS' CAUSE WERE EVEN MORE PROMINENT NOW AND ACCEPTED BY OTHER THIRD WORLD NATIONS AS MALAYSIA WAS A TRULY SOVEREIGN AND NON-ALIGNED STATE, HE SAID.

DR SODHY SAID THE WAY THE WORLD LOOKED AT MALAYSIA DEPENDED ON A CERTAIN ISSUE.

SHE SAID THE US WAS MORE IN TUNE WITH MALAYSIA ON THE DRUG MENACE THAN ON SOUTH AFRICA WHILE AUSTRALIA BACKED MALAYSIA DURING THE CONFRONTATION WITH INDONESIA BEFORE THE QUESTIONS OF DRUGS AND HIKE IN TUITION FEES FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS CROPPED UP.

SHE SAID MALAYSIA'S TOUGH POSITION ON DRUGS MUST BE LAUDED AS IT WAS THE BEST WAY TO COUNTER THE PROBLEM. -- MORE
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R E081 AAE
COMMONWEALTH 4 KUALA LUMPUR (EMBARGO)

DR KOBKUA SAID MALAYSIA'S ANTI-DRUG POSITION HAD PROMPTED THE UNITED NATIONS TO CONVENE A CONFERENCE ON THE PROBLEM IN VIENNA NEXT YEAR.

ON THE MALAYSIA-INITIATED SOUTH COMMISSION, HE SAID IT WAS TO PROMOTE GREATER COOPERATION AMONG ASEAN AND THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES IN VIEW OF THE UNSATISFACTORY COOPERATION FROM THE ADVANCED NATIONS.

ON TOURISM, HAJI ABDUL SAMAD SAID IT WAS A VITAL RESOURCE OF THE COUNTRY AND MUST BE PROPERLY DEVELOPED WITH THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF THE PEOPLE. -- BERNAMA
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