

D170

B E901 AAE  
MAHATHIR-COMMONWEALTH  
FROM ABDUL RAHMAN SULAIMAN

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LONDON, JULY 23 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID HE HAS NOT YET DECIDED WHETHER TO ATTEND THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER IN VANCOUVER BUT MALAYSIA +WILL DEFINITELY BE REPRESENTED.+

HE SAID ALTHOUGH HE HAD BEEN TOLD IT WOULD BE WORTHWHILE FOR HIM TO ATTEND, HE WAS +NOT IN A POSITION+ AS YET TO COMMIT HIMSELF.

THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE FOREIGN PRESS ASSOCIATION HERE LAST NIGHT THAT WHATEVER THE CASE MIGHT BE, MALAYSIA WOULD DEFINITELY BE REPRESENTED AT THE MEETING.

+I HAVE NOT DECIDED YET WHETHER OR NOT I SHALL GO TO VANCOUVER<sup>R</sup>, BUT MALAYSIA WILL BE REPRESENTED, AT WHAT LEVEL I DON'T KNOW. AND IF I SEE IT IS WORTHWHILE, I WILL GO THERE,+ HE SAID.

IT WAS REPORTED EARLIER THAT MALAYSIA WAS NOT KEEN TO ATTEND THE MEETING AS IT WAS NOT HAPPY WITH BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS SOUTH AFRICA.

AT A DINNER GIVEN IN DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR'S HONOUR BY HIS BRITISH COUNTERPART, PUAN MARGARET THATCHER, AT NO.10 DOWNING STREET THREE DAYS AGO, THE BRITISH PREMIER URGED HIM TO ATTEND THE MEETING, SAYING MALAYSIA COULD AIR ITS VIEWS ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES IT WAS NOW FIGHTING FOR. -- MORE

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID LAST NIGHT: +WE STILL HOLD OUR VIEW REGARDING THE FUNCTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH. THE COMMONWEALTH MUST PRODUCE AND PERFORM.

+THERE IS SOMETIMES A SEEMING DISREGARD FOR THE POORER COUNTRIES OR THE WEAKER COUNTRIES.

+SOME COUNTRIES APPEAR TO DOMINATE THE GROUPING AND THAT, I THINK, IS NOT RIGHT, BECAUSE WE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE SHARING THE COMMON WEALTH THAT WE ARE SUPPOSED TO HAVE, BUT OF COURSE THE WEALTH ACCRUES MORE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE RICH THAN POOR PEOPLE LIKE US.+

THE PRIME MINISTER STRESSED THAT THE LEAST THE COMMONWEALTH COULD DO WAS TO MAKE AN ATTEMPT TO SHOW THAT POORER COUNTRIES WERE GIVEN EQUAL WEIGHT AS MEMBERS OF THE GROUPING.

AS IT WAS AT PRESENT, HE FELT POOR COUNTRIES WERE DISREGARDED, WHILE THE RICH COUNTRIES MADE THEIR DECISIONS WITHOUT DUE REGARD FOR THE POOR.

THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO IS ON A SIX-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT TO BRITAIN, ALSO ANSWERED QUESTIONS ON AFGHANISTAN, KAMPUCHEA, THE WEST ASIA CONFLICT, MALAYSIA-BRITAIN RELATIONS AND A HOST OF OTHER SUBJECTS AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE ATTENDED BY MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN PRESS AND THE COMMONWEALTH PRESS ASSOCIATION. -- MORE

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ON KAMPUCHEA, HE SAID HE WOULD EXPECT SOME UNDERSTANDING IF NOT SYMPATHY FROM THE SOVIET LEADERS ON MALAYSIA'S POSITION WITH REGARD TO KAMPUCHEA WHEN HE PUTS THE CASE BEFORE THEM DURING HIS UPCOMING VISIT TO MOSCOW.

HE SAID IF THERE WAS ANYTHING THE SOVIET UNION COULD DO TO HELP RESOLVE THE ISSUE, IT WAS TO INFLUENCE VIETNAM TO ACCEPT THE NEED FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

+I THINK WE WOULD LIKE TO GET THE SOVIET UNION TO DO IT AND, I THINK, THEY WOULD RESPOND,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE FELT MOSCOW WOULD LIKE TO WITHDRAW FROM AFGHANISTAN IF AN ACCEPTABLE FORMULA COULD BE FOUND.

HE SAID MALAYSIA SAW A GENERAL CHANGE IN THE ATTITUDE OF THE SOVIET UNION TOWARDS THE KAMPUCHEAN ISSUE SINCE MIKHAIL GORBACHEV BECAME THE SOVIET LEADER.

+IF WE ARE NOT WRONG IN OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION, THE SOVIET UNION WOULD WANT TO GET OUT OF AFGHANISTAN IF A FORMULA IS FOUND,+ HE ADDED.

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COMMENTING ON THE LATEST UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN END TO THE GULF WAR, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HE THOUGHT THE DECISION WAS LONG OVERDUE.

THE FACT THAT THE SUPERPOWERS WERE NOW RESORTING TO THE UN, HE SAID, WAS A GOOD SIGN THAT THE WORLD WAS COMING BACK TO MULTI-LATERALISM.

HE SAID THE WAR HAD BEEN A GREAT WASTE AND WAS NOT GOING TO GIVE ANYBODY ANYTHING.

HE AGREED THAT THE ONLY WAY TO PUT A STOP TO THE WAR WAS TO DEPRIVE THE WARRING PARTIES OF WEAPONS.

+OBVIOUSLY, THE IRANIANS AND THE IRAQIS ARE NOT MAKING THOSE WEAPONS, THEY ARE BUYING THOSE WEAPONS,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER RECALLED THAT INsofar AS MALAYSIA WAS CONCERNED, IT HAD TRIED ITS BEST BUT FAILED AS A MEMBER OF THE ISLAMIC PEACE COMMITTEE TO HELP END THE CONFLICT. -- MORE

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+WE HAVE FAILED IN A SENSE AND SO HAVE OTHERS TOO IN THEIR TURN TO PUT TO AN END THE WAR. BUT I SEE A GLIMMER OF LIGHT HERE AND I THINK THAT IF BIG POWERS -- SUPERPOWERS -- ACTUALLY IMPLEMENT THIS AGREEMENT, AND THEY ARE IN A POSITION TO DO SO, THEN THE TWO COMBATANTS WILL BE DEPRIVED, STARVED OF WEAPONS AND THEY WILL HAVE TO COME TO THEIR SENSES AND ... THEY WILL HAVE TO SEEK TO NEGOTIATE AND DETERMINE THEIR BORDERS,+ HE SAID.

ASKED WHETHER MALAYSIA WOULD SUPPORT THE IMPOSITION OF AN ARMS EMBARGO, HE SAID MALAYSIA WOULD SUPPORT SUCH A MOVE IF IT DID NOT RESULT IN ONE SIDE BECOMING SO WEAK THAT THE OTHER SIDE MIGHT BE ABLE TO INVADE IT AND TAKE OVER THE FORMER.

+WE ARE NOT JUST THINKING ABOUT REDUCING THE ARMS FLOWING INTO THAT AREA, WE ARE ALSO THINKING OF A FAIR SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM -- THAT IRAN SHOULD NOT TAKE ANY IRAQI TERRITORY, NEITHER SHOULD IRAQ TAKE ANY IRANIAN TERRITORY,+ HE SAID. -- BERNAMA

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