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MAHATHIR-KAMPUCHEA⁸⁷

FROM ABDUL RAHMAN SULAIMAN

LONDON, JULY 25 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD IS OPTIMISTIC THAT AN AMICABLE SOLUTION CAN BE FOUND FOR THE KAMPUCHEAN ISSUE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

HE SAID TODAY HIS OPTIMISM WAS BASED ON WHAT HE PERCEIVED AS A CHANGE OF ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF THE NEW SOVIET LEADERSHIP ON THE ISSUE.

THE PRIME MINISTER WAS COMMENTING ON THE REPORTED STATEMENT FROM MOSCOW BY SOVIET LEADER MIKHAIL GORBACHEV THAT A +COALITION OF NATIONAL FORCES+ IN A UNITY GOVERNMENT WAS POSSIBLE FOR KAMPUCHEA.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO WILL BE VISITING THE SOVIET UNION NEXT WEEK, SAID MALAYSIA IN PARTICULAR AND ASEAN IN GENERAL SHOULD NOT BE TOO RIGID IN THEIR APPROACH SEEKING A SUITABLE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM.

ASKED WHEN HE THOUGHT THE ISSUE COULD BE RESOLVED, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WAS IN NO POSITION TO PROVIDE THE TIME FRAME, BUT ADDED +I AM VERY OPTIMISTIC THAT THE PROBLEM WILL BE RESOLVED.+ -- MORE

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IN AN INTERVIEW WITH AN INDONESIAN NEWSPAPER EDITOR RECENTLY, THE SOVIET LEADER SAID THE KAMPUCHEAN PROBLEM COULD ONLY BE SOLVED BY POLITICAL MEANS.

+AND IN OUR OPINION, WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT THE IDEA OF A NATIONAL RECONCILIATION IS SLOWLY BUT SURELY MAKING HEADWAY,+ GORBACHEV HAD SAID.

THE STATEMENT IS THE FIRST POSITIVE INDICATION BY SOVIET LEADERSHIP ON THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING A NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT IN KAMPUCHEA.

IT WAS EARLIER REPORTED THAT KREMLIN IN RECENT MONTHS OPENED CHANNELS OF DIALOGUE WITH ASEAN MEMBER COUNTRIES COMPRISING THAILAND, INDONESIA, THE PHILIPPINES, BRUNEI, SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA AND HAD FOR THE FIRST TIME AGREED TO DISCUSS KAMPUCHEA. -- BERNAMA
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