

U E293

CHOGM-MAHATHIR
FROM AZMAN UJANG

VANCOUVER, OCT 15 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD HAS TAKEN TO TASK COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES WHICH EITHER REFUSE TO IMPOSE SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA TO END APARTHEID OR WASTE THEIR TIME DEBATING OVER THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SUCH MEASURES.

HE TOLD THE ONGOING COMMONWEALTH SUMMIT MEETING HERE WEDNESDAY (THURSDAY IN MALAYSIA) THAT ONLY ACTION, AND NOT DEBATE, IN THE FORM OF SANCTIONS COULD RAISE HOPES OF BRINGING DOWN THE WHITE MINORITY RULE IN PRETORIA.

+THERE IS NO USE TO DEBATE ON WHETHER SUCH SANCTIONS ARE EFFECTIVE BUT WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR US IS TO TAKE ACTION IN ORDER TO SHORTEN THE PERIOD OF SUFFERINGS OF BLACK AFRICANS IN SOUTH AFRICA,+ HE TOLD THE SESSION WHICH SAW APARTHEID BEING HOTLY DEBATED.

ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT NAME COUNTRIES WHICH OPPOSED OR DRAGGED THEIR FEET ON SUCH SANCTIONS, IT WAS OBVIOUS THE PRIME MINISTER WAS POINTING A FINGER AT BRITAIN.

THE GULF BETWEEN BRITAIN AND THE REST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OVER THE QUESTION OF SANCTIONS WIDENED FURTHER WEDNESDAY WHEN BRITISH PRIME MINISTER MARGARET THATCHER ADAMANTLY RULED OUT ANY CHANGE IN HER OPPOSITION TO IT. -- MORE

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR REBUKED BRITISH CONTENTION THAT SANCTIONS WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE TO THE BLACK AFRICANS THEMSELVES, ADDING THAT THEY HAD SUFFERED LONG ENOUGH UNDER APARTHEID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT CERTAIN COUNTRIES WERE RELUCTANT TO APPLY SANCTIONS ON SOUTH AFRICA BUT AT THE SAME TIME WERE READY TO DO SO ON OTHERS.

HE TOLD THE SESSION THAT MALAYSIA ITSELF HAD SINCE 1965 UNILATERALLY IMPOSED TRADE SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA ALTHOUGH THIS RESULTED IN HUGE LOSSES AS IT COULD NOT SELL ITS COMMODITIES.

+WE BELIEVE THIS IS THE ONLY WAY FOR SOUTH AFRICA TO CHANGE ITS APARTHEID POLICY,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE COLLECTIVE ACTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH MIGHT NOT CHANGE THE SITUATION, IT WOULD CONSTITUTE A STRONG SIGNAL TO INFLUENCE THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND THE BLACKS IN THAT COUNTRY TO CHANGE THE RACIST SYSTEM. -- MORE
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CHOGM-MAHATHIR 3 VANCOUVER

+WE BELIEVE THAT IF WE DON'T TAKE ACTION NOW, THE SUFFERINGS OF THE BLACK AS WELL AS THE WHITE PEOPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA WILL BE PROLONGED.

+THIS IS THE PRICE TO PAY FOR THEIR FREEDOM AND THEREFORE WE HAVE TO TRY TO SHORTEN THEIR SUFFERINGS,+ THE PRIME MINISTER ADDED.

HE ALSO SPOKE OF ASSISTANCE TO STATES ON SOUTH AFRICA'S FRONTLINE AND THE BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA, AND SUGGESTED A NUMBER OF WAYS THIS COULD BE DONE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR PROPOSED THAT MILITARY ASSISTANCE BE PROVIDED TO GUARD THE VITAL RAILWAY LINES IN THE FRONTLINE STATES WHICH WERE THE SUBJECT OF ACTS OF SABOTAGE BY SOUTH AFRICA TO DESTABILISE THEM.

ELABORATING ON THIS, HE SAID THAT BECAUSE SOUTH AFRICA IS RACIST, IT WOULD BE MORE +SENSIBLE+ IF SECURITY FORCES GUARDING THE RAILWAY LINES COMPRISED WHITES FROM COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES SUCH AS AUSTRALIA, BRITAIN OR NEW ZEALAND. -- MORE
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CHOGM-MAHATHIR 4 VANCOUVER

+THIS MAY NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO MY COUNTERPARTS IN THE COMMONWEALTH BUT THIS IS JUST MY IDEA. MAYBE THIS IS ASKING TOO MUCH BUT IF WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE CAUSE OF ELIMINATING APARTHEID, WE SHOULD DO THIS,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO UNDERLINED THE NEED TO IMPROVE PORT FACILITIES IN THE FRONTLINE STATES, TO REDUCE THEIR DEPENDENCE ON SOUTH AFRICA'S FACILITIES, AND ASSURED THAT MALAYSIA WOULD HELP IN WHATEVER WAYS POSSIBLE.

PUAN THATCHER, WHO SPOKE AFTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR DID, AGAIN CATEGORICALLY OPPOSED THE USE OF SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA. SHE INSISTED THAT SANCTIONS WERE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE AND SAID SHE WOULD ALSO NEVER ACCEPT VIOLENCE AS A MEANS OF ENDING APARTHEID.

BUT INSTEAD SHE MADE VAGUE REFERENCE TO BRITISH EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT +CONSTRUCTIVE+ PROGRAMMES TO HELP BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

PUAN THATCHER'S STATEMENT PROVOKED AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE FROM THE FRONTLINE STATES' MOST SENIOR LEADER, ZAMBIAN PRESIDENT DR KENNETH KAUNDA, WHO REJECTED OUTRIGHT THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER'S VIEW THAT VIOLENCE SHOULD NOT BE USED TO SECURE A COUNTRY'S FREEDOM.

POINTING TO PRIME MINISTER ROBERT MUGABE OF ZIMBABWE SITTING BESIDE HIM, DR KAUNDA CAUSED A STIR WHEN HE SAID: +LOOK AT MUGABE. HE WAS A TERRORIST WHO FOUGHT FOR HIS COUNTRY'S FREEDOM, BUT NOW HE IS A STATESMAN?

-- BERNAMA

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