

B E430 ARE  
MAHATHIR-SABAH R' R' R  
FROM ABDULRAHMAN SULAIMAN  
EM

MANILA, DEC 15 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI OR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY LIKENED THE UNRESOLVED PHILIPPINE CLAIM TO SABAH TO +A BONE STUCK IN THE THROAT+.

NEVERTHELESS, THE RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND THE PHILIPPINES WERE STILL NORMAL, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID.

+OUR TIES REMAIN NORMAL. BUT THERE IS SOMETHING NAGGING US+, HE SAID? AND QUOTED A MALAY PROVERB +SEPERTITULANGTERLEKAT DI RENGKONG, DITELAN SAKIT, DIBUANG TAKBOLEH+ CLITERALLY, LIKE A BONE STUCK IN THE THROAT, PAINFUL TO SWALLOW AND DIFFICULT TO REMOVE), REFERRING TO THE CLAIM.

THE PRIME MINISTER WAS RESPONDING TO A QUESTION FROM MALAYSIAN JOURNALISTS ABOUT THE DELAY IN THE PROCESSTO DROP THE PHILIPPINE CLAIMTO SABAH BY LEGISLATORS HERE.

A BILL TO ENABLE THE PHILIPPINES TO OFFICIALLY ABANDON THE 25-YEAR-OLD CLAIM IS NOW BEFORE THE SENATE.

HOWEVER, A SETTLEMENT OF THE PROPRIETARY RIGHTS OF THE HEIRS OF THE SULU SULTANATE IS BEING SOUGHT AS A PRE-CONDITION FOR THE DROPPING OF THE CLAIM. -- MORE  
1556MST 15 12 8 7

D673

B E435 AAE  
MAHATHIR-SABAH 2 MANILA R' R' R'

THE PHILIPPINE CONGRESS HAD EARLIER APPROVED A SIMILAR BILL, BUT WITHOUT ANY CONDITIONS ATTACHED, AT THE BEHEST OF PRESIDENT CORAZON AQUINO.

THE MOVE HAD RAISED HOPES AMONG MANY CIRCLES THAT THE PROCESS OF RELINQUISHING THE CLAIM COULDBE COMPLETED BY THE TIME THE THIRD ASEAN SUMMIT, WHICH OFFICIALLY CLOSED TODAY, WAS HELD.

DATUK SER.1 DR MAHATHIR, HERE FOR THE CONFERENCE WITH THE OTHER ASEAN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT, SAID HE PERSONALLY FELT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER IF THE MATTER HAD DEVELOPED THAT WAY.

HE SAID HE HAD MET WITH PRESIDENT AQUINO AND HAD RECEIVED AN EXPLANATION FROM SENATE PRESIDENT JOVITOSALONGA WHO MET HIM AT HIS HOTEL.

PRESIDENT AQUINO HAD TOLD HIM THE PHILIPPINE SENATE WAS AN INDEPENDENT BODY NOT BOUND BY DECISIONS MADE BY THE PRESIDENT OR, CONGRESS. -- MORE

1617MST 15 12 8 7

D675

B E436 AAE  
MAHATHIR-SABAH 3 MANILA R' R' R'

+IN VIEW OF THIS, WE TOLD THE PRESIDENT THAT WE UNDERSTOOD THE PROCESS AND ARE PREPARED TO WAIT FOR WHATEVER DECISION THE SENATE MIGHT ARRIVE AT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS HERE SO THAT THE SABAH PROBLEM CAN BE RESOLVED, + HE SAID.

DATUK SER.1 OR MAHATHIR REITERATED MALAYSIA'S STAND THAT THE PROPRIETARY RIGHTS OF THE SULU SULTANATE HEIRS WERE SEPARATE FROM THE CLAIM TO SABAH.

+IN OUR VIEW, THE PHILIPPINES CAN DROP ITS CLAIM TO SABAH WHILE WE WILL NEGOTIATE WITH THE HEIRS OF THE SULU SULTANATE LATER, + HE SAID.

ASKED WHETHER THE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN PUAN AQUINO AND CONGRESS ON ONE HAND AND THE SENATE ON THE OTHER HAD BEEN STAGE-MANAGED, AS WAS WIDELY BELIEVED, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HE HAD NO IDEA WHAT ACTUALLY TOOK PLACE.

+WHAT I KNOW IS - THERE IS A DIVERGENCE OF VIEWS BETWEEN PUAN AQUINO AND CONGRESS ON ONE SIDE AND THE SENATE ON THE OTHER, + HE SAID. - - MORE

1621MST 15 12 8 7

0711

B E450 AAE  
MAHATHIR-SABAH 4 MANILA R'R'R'

ON THE SUMMIT, DATUKSERI OR MAHATHIR SAID HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME.

HE SAID THE CONFERENCE WAS CONCLUDED IN A SHORT TIME AS THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED IN FULL THE RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE SENIOR OFFICIALS AND MINISTERS.

DATUKSERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO ATTENDED THE SUMMIT FOR THE FIRST TIME AS PRIME MINISTER, SAID IT HAD GIVEN HIM AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET TO KNOW THE OTHER ASEAN LEADERS BETTER, ESPECIALLY PUAN AQUINO WHOM HE MET FOR THE FIRST TIME.

HE SAID THE POST-SUMMIT INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS HELD BY THE SIX ASEAN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT HAD ENABLED THE LEADERS OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM, INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, THAILAND AND SINGAPORE TO GET A FIRSTHAND VIEW OF THE CURRENT SECURITY AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE PHILIPPINES.

AT THE MEETING, HE SAID, PUAN AQUINO HAD BRIEFED THE OTHER LEADERS ON WHAT WAS HAPPENING HERE. HE DID NOT ELABORATE.

ON THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED BY ASEAN, DATUKSERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE 20-YEAR-OLD REGIONAL GROUPING HAD ATTAINED MUCH IN THE POLITICAL FIELD ALTHOUGH THERE WAS STILL MUCH TO BE DONE IN ECONOMIC MATTERS.

-- MORE

1732MST 15 12 87

D712

B E451 AAE  
MAHATHIR-SABAH 5 MANILA R'R'R'

THIS WAS UNDERSTANDABLE AS ASEAN WAS FORMED NOT FOR ECONOMIC REASONS BUT FOR POLITICAL REASONS, HE SAID.

+INECONOMIC TERMS, WE HAVE COMPETING ECONOMIES AND AS SUCH THE PROGRESS OF COOPERATION IN THIS FIELD HAS SEEN LESS,+ HE ADDED.

NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID, HE SAW A SINCERE POLITICAL DETERMINATION DISPLAYED AT THE SUMMIT TO FURTHER UPGRADE ECONOMIC COOPERATION.

IT WAS LEFT TO THE OFFICIALS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN EACH COUNTRY TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENTS THAT HAD BEEN REACHED, HE SAID, ADDING THAT THIS PROCESS WOULD TAKE TIME.

ON THE US\$2 BILLION (M\$5 BILLION) OFFERED BY JAPAN TO FUND ASEAN PRIVATE SECTOR PROJECTS, DATUKSERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IT WAS UP TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR OF EACH COUNTRY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS CHEAP SOURCE OF FUNDS TO UNDERTAKE NEW PROJECTS OR TO EXPAND THEIR ACTIVITIES.

UNLIKE OTHER EARLIER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE EXTENDED BY JAPAN WHICH WAS ONLY FOR INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS, THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME SUCH FACILITIES WERE BEING DIRECTED SPECIFICALLY AT THE PRIVATE SECTOR, HE SAID. -- SERNAMA

1734MST 15 12 87