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R E590 AAE

MAHATHIR-MARKET (EMBARGO) FOR RELEASE AFTER 7PM TODAY)
BY AHMAD REJAL/ARBEE

BONN, SEPT 19 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD, NOW ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, TODAY EXPRESSED ASEAN'S CONCERN THAT THE FORMATION OF A SINGLE EUROPEAN UNION BY 1992 COULD UNDERMINE THE ACCESS OF COUNTRIES LIKE MALAYSIA TO THE EUROPEAN MARKET.

HE SAID ASEAN HAD FOLLOWED THE EFFORTS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION WITH GREAT INTEREST AND TREPIDATION THAT SUCH A MAXIMUM INTRA-REGIONAL SCHEME MIGHT PRODUCE A +FORTRESS EUROPE+ PERSPECTIVE. SUCH AN EVENTUALITY WOULD NOT ONLY FURTHER UNDERMINE THE ALREADY LIMITED MARKET ACCESS TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES BUT COULD ALSO DIVERT EUROPEAN INVESTMENTS TO ITS LOW COST MEMBER STATES, THEREBY AFFECTING THE ONGOING EFFORTS TO PROMOTE GREATER EUROPEAN INVESTMENT IN ASEAN.

+IT IS MALAYSIA'S HOPE THAT THE MARCH TOWARDS 1992 WILL NOT RESULT IN AN INWARD-LOOKING EUROPEAN COMMUNITY BUT THAT IT WOULD REMAIN COMMITTED TO THE LIBERALISATION OF GLOBAL TRADE,+ DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER WAS ADDRESSING AN OFFICIAL LUNCHEON HOSTED BY CHANCELLOR DR HELMUT KOHL AT THE PALACE SCHAUMBURG NEAR THE FEDERAL CHANCELLERY. -- MORE

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MAHATHIR-MARKET 2 BONN (EMBARGOED)

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MALAYSIA, A DEVELOPING COUNTRY INCREASINGLY DEPENDENT ON WORLD TRADE, WAS SUPPORTIVE OF THE URUGUAY ROUND OF MULTINATIONAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS.

MALAYSIA ALSO BELIEVED IN STRENGTHENING THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE (GATT) TO ENABLE IT TO ADEQUATELY RESPOND TO THE CHANGING PATTERN OF GLOBAL TRADE.

+EFFORTS MUST THEREBY BE MADE BY ALL CONTRACTING PARTIES TO ACHIEVE EARLY PROGRESS IN THE URUGUAY ROUND IN DEALING WITH TRADE RESTRICTIONS AND DISTORTIONS. TRADE DISPUTES IN AGRICULTURE IN PARTICULAR SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO REACH A POINT WHERE THEY JEOPARDISE ALL CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS,+ HE ADDED.

+MALAYSIA, AND FOR THAT MATTER ALL DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, NOT ONLY EXPECT FIRM AGREEMENT ON THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AT THE MIDTERM REVIEW CONFERENCE IN MONTREAL IN DECEMBER BUT ALSO HOPE THAT PROGRESS WILL BE MADE ON AS MANY FRONTS AS POSSIBLE, INCLUDING IN PARTICULAR CONCRETE RESULTS ON TRADE IN TROPICAL PRODUCTS.+

THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS DELEGATION WAS THIS MORNING GIVEN A RED CARPET CEREMONIAL WELCOME BY DR KOHL AT THE FEDERAL CHANCELLERY WHERE HE INSPECTED A GUARD OF HONOUR MOUNTED BY THE FEDERAL ARMED FORCES. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY A FOUR-EYED MEETING OF THE TWO LEADERS IN DR KOHL'S OFFICE. -- MORE

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MAHATHIR-MARKET 3 BONN (EMBARGOED)

EARLIER THIS MORNING, MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY DATIN PADUKA RAFIDAH AZIZ AND MINISTER OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES DATUK LIM KENG YAIK HAD SEPARATE DISCUSSIONS AT THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMICS WITH FEDERAL MINISTER OF ECONOMICS DR MARTIN BANGEMANN.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR IN HIS LUNCHEON ADDRESS ALSO EXPRESSED MALAYSIA'S APPRECIATION OF WEST GERMANY'S ADVOCACY OF THE LIBERALISATION OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE.

+IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT MARKET ACCESS FOR OUR PRIMARY COMMODITIES AND MANUFACTURED GOODS GOES A LONG WAY TOWARDS STRENGTHENING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC COHESION OF DEVELOPING SOCIETIES AND HELPS CUSHION THE CYCLICAL DEPRESSIONS THAT THEY ARE SUBJECTED TO,+ HE SAID.

RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND WEST GERMANY WERE DESCRIBED AS VERY GOOD AND FRIENDLY AND WITHOUT PROBLEMS WITH BOTH COUNTRIES HAVING A LARGE MEASURE OF AGREEMENT IN FOREIGN POLICY AIMS, LIKE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TENSION, PROMOTION OF FREE, WORLD TRADE AND CONSTRUCTIVE NORTH-SOUTH COOPERATION.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS, PARTICULARLY IN TRADE AND INVESTMENT, HAD BEEN STEADY WITH WEST GERMANY NOW THE BIGGEST BUYER OF MALAYSIAN GOODS IN THE EC, AMOUNTING TO 1.43 BILLION DEUTSCHE MARKS IN 1986 AND 1.49 BILLION DEUTSCHE MARKS IN 1987. -- MORE
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(THE VALUE HAD IN FACT DROPPED FROM A HIGH OF 2.24 BILLION DEUTSCHE MARKS IN 1984 MAINLY BECAUSE OF THE COLLAPSE OF PRICES OF MALAYSIA'S GOODS BOUGHT BY THE GERMANS WHICH WERE MAINLY BAWN TIMBER, PALM OIL, TEXTILES, COCOA AND MANUFACTURED/SEMI-MANUFACTURED GOOD).

WEST GERMAN EXPORTS TO MALAYSIA AMOUNTED TO 801.3 MILLION DEUTSCHE MARKS AND 801.2 MILLION DEUTSCHE MARKS IN 1986 AND 1987 RESPECTIVELY, WITH THE BALANCE OF TRADE ALWAYS IN MALAYSIA'S FAVOUR. THE SURPLUS CAME TO THE TUNE OF 631.8 MILLION DEUTSCHE MARKS IN 1986 AND 648.5 MILLION DEUTSCHE MARKS IN 1987.

THERE HAD ALSO BEEN A STEADY INCREASE OF GERMAN INVESTMENTS IN MALAYSIA, AND WEST GERMANY WAS NOW THE SIXTH BIGGEST FOREIGN INVESTOR WITH A TOTAL EXPOSURE OF 309 MILLION DEUTSCHE MARKS. A TOTAL OF 50 GERMAN ENTERPRISES HAD SET UP MANUFACTURING PLANTS IN MALAYSIA.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO EXPRESSED THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN OVER THE ANTI-TROPICAL TIMBER CAMPAIGN WHICH HE SAID WAS BECOMING MORE AND MORE VOCIFEROUS. +THIS CAMPAIGN IS UNWORTHY OF ITS LAUDABLE AIMS FOR IT GROSSLY DISTORTS FACTS AND IS DISCRIMINATORY IN ITS OBJECTIVE,+ HE SAID.

+I WISH TO EMPHASISE HERE THAT MALAYSIA HAS ALREADY UNDERTAKEN EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO CONSERVE ITS FORESTS, IMPLEMENT REAFFORESTATION AND DEVELOP COMPENSATORY PLANTATION PROGRAMMES ALONG WITH A REDUCTION OF FELLING RATE TO MAINTAIN ITS ECOSYSTEM. WE DO NOT JUST SEE TREES- WE ARE DEEPLY AWARE OF THE WOODS AND THE NEED TO CONSERVE THEM,+ HE ADDED. -- MORE
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MAHATHIR-MARKET 3 BONN (EMBARGOED)

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO EXPRESSED MALAYSIA'S GRATITUDE TO WEST GERMANY FOR RESETTLING SOME 3,500 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. MALAYSIA, HE SAID, HAD RECENTLY REACHED AN UNDERSTANDING WITH VIETNAM TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM.

HANOI, HE ADDED, WAS NOW PREPARED TO ACCEPT REPATRIATION OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE NOW IN MALAYSIA AND NOT QUALIFIED FOR RESETTLEMENT IN THIRD COUNTRIES. VIETNAM HAD ALSO GIVEN A COMMITMENT TO PREVENT A FRESH EXODUS OF THE BOAT PEOPLE.

MALAYSIA WAS ALSO HAPPY THAT VIETNAM HAD AGREED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES EARLY NEXT YEAR AS WELL AS THE PREPARATORY MEETING IN MALAYSIA IN NOVEMBER. MALAYSIA HOPED ALL RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES WOULD EXTEND THEIR SUPPORT TO THIS ASEAN INITIATIVE AND MAKE THE CONFERENCE A SUCCESS.

THIS AFTERNOON, THE PRIME MINISTER AND DATIN SERI DR SITI HASMAH PAID A COURTESY CALL ON PRESIDENT RICHARD VON WEIZACKER AND MRS VON WEIZACKER AT THEIR OFFICIAL RESIDENCE.

LATER IN THE EVENING, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HELD SEPARATE DISCUSSIONS WITH MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF THE RULING SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND LATER WITH DR ALFRED DRESSER, CHAIRMAN OF THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION/CHRISTIAN SOCIAL UNION IN THE BUNDESTAG (PARLIAMENT).

DATIN SERI DR SITI HASMAH HAD A SEPARATE PROGRAMME VISITING A STUD FARM IN ROTTGEN NEAR HERE AND LATER THE BIRTHPLACE HERE OF THE GREAT GERMAN COMPOSER, WOLFGANG AMADEUS BEETHOVEN, FOLLOWED BY A MUSICAL RECITAL. -- BERNAHA

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