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MAHATHIR-COMMONWEALTH
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FROM ABDUL RAHMAN SULAIMAN

BELGRADE9 SEPT 8 (BERNAMA) -- MALAYSIA IS TAKING A NEUTRAL STAND OVER THE ELECTION OF A NEW COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL TO SUCCEED SIR SHRIDATH RAHPHAL WHOSE TERM OF OFFICE ENDS BEFORE NEXT MONTH'S COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING (CHOGM) IN KUALA LUMPUR.

PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID HERE TODAY THAT AS HOST AND CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING, IT WOULD BE IMPROPER FOR MALAYSIA TO SUPPORT ANY CANDIDATE.

THE TWO CANDIDATES VYING FOR THE POST ARE THE INCUMBENT DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL CHIEF EMEKA ANYAOKU OF NIGERIA AND FORMER AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER MALCOLM FRASER.

SPEAKING TO MALAYSIAN NEWSMEN AT THE END OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT (NAM) SUMMIT HERE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MALAYSIA WOULD PREFER THE POST TO BE FILLED WITHOUT A CONTEST.

+A CONTEST WOULD ONLY RESULT IN MEMBER NATIONS BEING INVOLVED IN A DISPUTE,+ HE SAID.

TO AVOID SUCH A POSSIBILITY, MALAYSIA WAS TRYING TO ASCERTAIN THE STAND OF MEMBER COUNTRIES OVER THEIR CHOICE. --MORE

1523MST 08 09 89

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MAHATHIR-COMMONWEALTH 2 BELGRADE (RPTING TO CORRECT LAST PARA)R
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+IF WE FIND ONE OF THE CANDIDATES IS NOT GETTING THE SUPPORT OR IS LESS POPULAR, WE WILL TRY TO LOOK FOR WAYS SO THAT HE WILL NOT CONTEST.

+THIS WILL PREVENT A DISPUTE,+ DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID.

ASKED WHETHER THE MATTER COULD BE RESOLVED BEFORE THE START OF CHOGM (SCHEDULED FROM OCT 18 TO 24), THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT AS OF TODAY, HE WAS STILL NOT SURE.

SINCE THE PAST FOUR DAYS HE WAS HERE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MET SEVERAL COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT, WHOSE COUNTRIES ARE ALSO NAM MEMBERS, TO SEEK THEIR VIEWS ON THE MATTER:

REGARDING THE JUST-CONCLUDED NINTH NAM SUMMIT, HE SAID HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME, DESCRIBING SOME CHANGES IN THE CONFERENCE'S APPROACHES AS BEING TANGIBLE.

+IF PAST MEETINGS SAW EMOTIONAL SPEECHES, THIS TIME THE FOCUS WAS MORE TOWARDS THE TASK LYING AHEAD FOR NAM AND THIS WILL BENEFIT THE MOVEMENT,+ HE ADDED.

HE ALSO RULED OUT ANY POSSIBILITY OF MALAYSIA BIDDING TO HOST THE NEXT MEETING OF NAM, SAYING +WE HAVE NO INTENTION BECAUSE RIGHT NOW WE ARE NOT PREPARED.+

+HOSTING CHOGM IS ENOUGH,+ HE SAID. --MORE ,

1551MST 08 09 89

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MAHATHIR-COMMONWEALTH 3 BELGRADE

ON THE PROPOSAL TO FORM A GROUP OF 16 FROM AMONG MODERATE
NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES TO FURTHER PROMOTE SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION,
DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MALAYSIA AGREED TO JOIN THE GROUP
BECAUSE IT WOULD STRIVE TO IMPLEMENT PROGRAMMES AGREED UPON BY NAM.

HE SAID THE PROPOSED MEMBERS NOT ONLY REPRESENTED THE VARIOUS
REGIONS BUT WERE ALSO REGARDED AS BEING ACTIVE IN NAM.

AS FOR THE MOVE TO SET UP A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN THE SOUTH,
THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HIS INDIAN COUNTERPART, ENCIKRAJIV GANDHI,
CONCURRED THAT A CENTRE OR A FEW INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN
THE SOUTH BE IDENTIFIED TO TAKE IN STUDENTS FROM DEVELOPING NATIONS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT AT THE MOMENT, THOUSANDS OF
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WERE STUDYING IN
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND WERE SPENDING A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF MONEY.

THERE WERE ALSO MANY LECTURERS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES SERVING
IN UNIVERSITIES IN DEVELOPED NATIONS.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IF THESE STUDENTS AND LECTURERS COULD BE
ATTRACTED TO STUDY OR SERVE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, THEY WOULD NOT
ONLY BE SAVING COST AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE BUT ALSO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS
DEVELOPING THEIR OWN COUNTRY. --BERNAHA

1609MST 08 09 89