

U E417 AAE
MAHATHIR-BUSH
FROM ZAINOOR SULAIMAN

BOSTON, MAY 22 (BERNAMA) -- PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH HAS ASSURED PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD THAT HE WILL ACT AGAINST ALLEGATIONS THAT UNITED STATES FEDERAL AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN UNFAIR TO MALAYSIA IN ITS EFFORTS TO COUNTER THE SMEAR CAMPAIGN AGAINST PALM OIL.

THE US PRESIDENT GAVE THE ASSURANCE DURING A 30-MINUTE MEETING WITH DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR IN A SPECIAL ROOM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BOSTON HERE YESTERDAY.

THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD BERNAMA AFTER THE MEETING THAT HE HAD BROUGHT TO ENCIK BUSH'S ATTENTION THE UNFAIR ACTION BY THE US FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION (FTC) WHICH ONLY QUESTIONED MALAYSIA'S MOVES TO COUNTER ALLEGATIONS BY CERTAIN PARTIES IN THE US WHICH REGARDED PALM OIL AS +POISONOUS+ AND HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH.

FTC HAD QUESTIONED THE POSTERS PUT UP BY MALAYSIA WHICH DESCRIBED PALM OIL AS NUTRITIONAL AND NOT A HEALTH HAZARD BY SAYING THAT SO FAR THERE HAD BEEN NO RESEARCH FINDINGS ON THE MATTER.

ON THE OTHER HAND, FTC DID NOT QUESTION THE POSTERS WHICH WERE EARLIER PUT UP BY THE AMERICAN SOYABEAN ASSOCIATION AND THE AMERICAN HEART SAVERS ASSOCIATION WHICH HAD ALLEGED THAT PALM OIL WAS POISONOUS AND A HEALTH HAZARD REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THERE WERE BASIS FOR THESE CLAIMS OR OTHERWISE.-- MORE
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THE PRIME MINISTER SAID MALAYSIA'S ACTION WAS MERELY TO EXPLAIN THE TRUE SITUATION.

HE SAID HE HAD HANDED OVER THE POSTERS ISSUED BY THOSE OPPOSING PALM OIL AND THAT OF THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT TO PRESIDENT BUSH.

ENCIK BUSH PLEDGED TO STUDY THE PROBLEM AND HANDED OVER THE POSTERS TO THE US NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL FOR FURTHER ACTION.

PRESIDENT BUSH IS HERE TO ATTEND THE UNIVERSITY CONVOCATION AT WHICH DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR'S SON, MUKHRIZ 21, RECEIVED HIS BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT DEGREE.

ENCIK BUSH AND FRENCH PRESIDENT FRANCOIS MITTERAND WERE CONFERRED HONORARY DOCTORATES IN LAW BY THE UNIVERSITY WHICH IS CELEBRATING ITS 150TH ANNIVERSARY.

ADDRESSING ABOUT 30,000 GRADUANDS AND PARENTS AT THE CONVOCATION, PRESIDENT BUSH PAID SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR AS A STATESMAN AND CLOSE FRIEND OF THE UNITED STATES.

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BUSH WAS TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN EXISTING RELATIONS BETWEEN THEM AND THE TWO COUNTRIES.

THE PRIME MINISTER MET ENCIK BUSH IN 1984 WHEN HE WAS VICE-PRESIDENT.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HE AND THE PRESIDENT FELT THERE WAS NO MAJOR PROBLEM IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

GENERALLY MALAYSIA AND THE UNITED STATES SHARED EXCELLENT RELATIONS, HE ADDED.

THE TWO LEADERS ALSO DISCUSSED THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN KAMPUCHEA AND THE PRIME MINISTER EXPLAINED ASEAN'S STAND ON THE PROBLEM.

+PRESIDENT BUSH WANTED TO KNOW THE STAND TAKEN BY ASEAN AND MALAYSIA ON THE MATTER,+ DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID ASEAN'S STAND WAS THAT ALL PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT -- VIETNAM, KHMER ROUGE, KPRLF, FOLLOWERS OF PRINCE NORODOM SIHANOUK AND THE HENG SAMRIN PUPPET REGIME -- SHOULD TAKE PART IN EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE KAMPUCHEAN CRISIS.

ASEAN ALSO SUPPORTED THE PARTICIPATION OF OTHER POWERS TO SUPERVISE ANY REFERENDUM OR ELECTIONS TO CREATE A LEGITIMATE REGIME IN KAMPUCHEA, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID.

MALAYSIA WAS CONCERNED BECAUSE THERE WERE CERTAIN GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES WHICH FELT THAT GROUPS WHICH COOPERATED WITH THE KHMER ROUGE, WHICH HAS A BLACK HISTORY IN KAMPUCHEA, SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN ASSISTANCE. -- MORE

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+THIS ATTITUDE DIFFERS FROM OUR STAND AND THAT OF ASEAN,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT HE STRESSED TO PRESIDENT BUSH THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF PROVIDING AID TO STRENGTHEN ANTI-COMMUNIST GROUPS OF THE KHMER PEOPLE'S NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (KPRLF).

IF THEY WERE WEAK, THEY WOULD BE OVECOME BY THE KHMER ROUGE AND EFFORTS TO PREVENT THE KHMER ROUGE FROM RETURNING TO POWER IN KAMPUCHEA WOULD BE FUTILE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HE WAS GLAD THAT PRESIDENT BUSH HAD REACTED POSITIVELY TO THE MATTER AND HAD PLEDGED TO CONTINUE SUPPORTING THE ASEAN STAND ON THE KAMPUCHEAN ISSUE.

THE PRESIDENT ALSO WANTED TO KNOW THE ROLE WHICH PRINCE NORODOM SIHANOUK COULD PLAY IN RESOLVING THE KAMPUCHEAN ISSUE.

IN THIS RESPECT, HE TOLD THE PRESIDENT THAT AT PRESENT THERE WAS NO SUITABLE LEADER ACCEPTABLE TO THE PARTIES IN THE CONFLICT AND TO THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE WITH THE EXCEPTION OF PRINCE SIHANOUK.

PRESIDENT BUSH AND DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO DISCUSSED THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN COMMUNIST CHINA.

THE PRIME MINISTER'S WIFE DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH ALSO HAD A MEETING WITH THE UNITED STATES FIRST LADY PUAN BARBARA BUSH AT THE UNIVERSITY.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO HAD A MEETING WITH MASSACHUSETTS GOVERNOR MICHAEL DUKAKIS. -- BERNAMA

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