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MAHATHIR-THATCHER
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BY ZAINOOR SULAIMAN
LONDON; MAY 25 (BERNAMA) -- MALAYSIA AND BRITAIN HAVE AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT TO ENABLE BOTH COUNTRIES TO SEIZE THE ASSETS OF DRUG OFFENDERS; PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID.

THE AGREEMENT WAS REACHED BETWEEN HIM AND HIS BRITISH COUNTERPART, PUAN MARGARET THATCHER AT NO. 10, DOWNING STREET HERE YESTERDAY.

THE AGREEMENT WOULD ENABLE MALAYSIA TO SEIZE THE ASSETS IN BRITAIN OF A PERSON CONVICTED IN MALAYSIA FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING; HE TOLD MALAYSIAN JOURNALISTS AT THE MALAYSIAN HIGH COMMISSION HERE.

LIKewise, IF A PERSON WAS CONVICTED IN BRITAIN FOR A SIMILAR OFFENCE, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT COULD SEIZE HIS ASSETS IN MALAYSIA WHICH WERE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN OBTAINED FROM THE PROCEEDS OF DRUG TRAFFICKING, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HE WAS HAPPY THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES HAD TAKEN SUCH A MEASURE TO COMBAT THE DRUG MENACE. -- MORE
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HE SAID THE FIGHT AGAINST THE DADAH MENACE NEEDED THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MALAYSIA ALSO PROPOSED TO CONCLUDE SIMILAR AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. SO FAR, MALAYSIA HAS SIGNED SUCH AN AGREEMENTS WITH THAILAND AND SINGAPORE.

ON MONDAY, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HAD MET PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH OF THE UNITED STATES IN BOSTON.

AT YESTERDAY'S MEETING, HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MALAYSIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO BRITAIN DATUK MON JAMALUDDIN WHILE PUAN THATCHER WAS ACCOMPANIED BY HER PRIVATE SECRETARY, ENCIK CHARLES POWEL.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID NOTHING SPECIAL WAS DISCUSSED ON BILATERAL MATTERS BECAUSE GENERALLY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE GOOD. -- MORE
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AT THE MEETING, PUAN THATCHER SAID THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO HELP FUND FEASIBILITY STUDIES ON SPECIFIC PROJECTS, STRESSING THAT THIS DEVELOPMENT AID WAS SOMETHING ONGOING AND HAD NO CONNECTION WITH THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO BUY BRITISH ARMS WORTH ONE BILLION POUND STERLING (ABOUT M\$4.2 BILLION) FROM BRITAIN.

THE TWO LEADERS ALSO EXCHANGED VIEWS ON CURRENT ISSUES INCLUDING THE UNREST IN CHINA, THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN KAMPUCHEA, NAMIBIA, THE PALESTINE QUESTION AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING TO BE HELD IN KUALA LUMPUR IN OCTOBER.

ON NAMIBIA, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR STRESSED THE NEED TO BEEF UP THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCE TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT.

THERE WERE TOO MANY SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS, ABOUT 60,000, COMPARED WITH ONLY 4,500 UN MILITARY PERSONNEL IN NAMIBIA AT PRESENT AND THIS HAD CAUSED PROBLEMS, HE SAID.

HE URGED THAT THE NUMBER OF UN TROOPS BE INCREASED DESPITE THE ADDITIONAL COSTS TO MAKE THE UN'S AIM OF HELPING THE PEOPLE OF NAMIBIA SET UP A FREE AND INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT A REALITY. -- MORE
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IF NECESSARY, MALAYSIA WAS PREPARED TO INCREASE THE STRENGTH OF ITS CONTINGENT SERVING WITH THE UN TRANSITION ASSISTANCE GROUP (UNTAG) IN NAMIBIA, HE ADDED.

HE SAID MALAYSIA AND BRITAIN -- BOTH MEMBERS OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

-- AGREED TO RAISE THE MATTER FOR DISCUSSION BY COUNCIL MEMBERS.

MALAYSIA BELIEVED AN IMPORTANT DECISION LIKE THIS MUST BE MADE BY THE WORLD BODY AND NOT BY JUST ONE OR TWO COUNTRIES, HE SAID.

ON PALESTINE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WELCOMED BRITAIN'S SUPPORT FOR THE STAND OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANISATION (PLO) WHICH IS FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHTS OF PALESTINIANS TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMELAND.

HE SAID ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE TEL AVIV REGIME, YITZAK SHAMIR, ONLY WANTED TO GRANT THEM AUTONOMY WHILE PALESTINIAN SOIL ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER JORDON REMAINED ISRAELI TERRITORY. -- MORE

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ENCIK SHAMIR MET PUAN THATCHER HERE ON TUESDAY TO SEEK BRITISH SUPPORT IN THE FACE OF PRESSURE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO ACCEPT THE UN RESOLUTION ON A SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IT WOULD BE MEANINGLESS FOR THE PLO TO BE AN AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENT WITHOUT DOMINION OVER ITS OWN COUNTRY. -- BERNAMA

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