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TAIB-MAHATHIR  
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KUCHING, AUG 1 3 (BERNAMA) SARAWAK CHIEF MINISTER TAN SRI HAJI ABDUL TAIB MAHMUD CLARIFIED TODAY THAT THERE IS NO MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN HIM AND PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HOHAMAD AS REPORTED IN THE FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW (FEER) RECENTLY.

HE SAID HE WAS A STAUNCH SUPPORTER OF THE PRIME MINISTER EVEN WHEN DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WAS FACING CRITICAL MOMENTS.

+THIS IS A FACT KNOWN TO THE PUBLIC,+ HE TOLD REPORTERS AT THE KUCHING INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON HIS RETURN FROM A TWO-WEEK VACATION.

TAN SRI TAIB SAID IF THIS DID NOT QUALIFY HIM TO BECOME THE PRIME MINISTER'S FRIEND AS ALLEGED BY THE MAGAZINE, THEN THE FEER MUST HAVE THEIR OWN INTERPRETATION OF THE MEANING OF FRIENDSHIP.

THE FEER, IN ITS JULY 27 ISSUE, REPORTED THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHIEF MINISTER AND THE PRIME MINISTER WAS TENSE FOLLOWING SEVERAL EVENTS SUCH AS THE APPOINTMENT OF PART 1 BANSA DAYAK SARAWAK (PBDS) PRESIDENT DATUK LEO MOGGIE, FORMERLY ENERGY, TELECOMMUNICATION AND POSTS MINISTER, AS WORKS MINISTER AND THE EXPOSURE OF THE PLOT TO KILL TAN SRI TAIB, APART FROM THE RELEASE OF SEVEN PEOPLE FROM SARAWAK, WHO WERE DETAINED UNDER THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT (ISA), FOLLOWING THE DISCLOSURE OF THE PLOT, AS THE CAUSE OF THE RIFT. -- MORE

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TAIB-MAHATHIR 2 KUCHING

+IF THERE ARE GROUPS WHO WANT TO PIT ME AGAINST DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, I FEEL THAT HE (THE PRIME MINISTER) CAN THINK FOR HIMSELF, AND SO CAN I.+

+I CAN APPRECIATE THE MEANING OF FRIENDSHIP LIKE ANYONE ELSE, AND I HAVE ALREADY CARRIED OUT MY DUTIES FOR SARAWAK AS ENTRUSTED UPON ME,+ HE SAID.

TAN SRI TAIB SAID AS THE CHIEF MINISTER, IT WAS HIS RESPONSIBILITY TO SAFEGUARD SARAWAK IN WHATEVER ISSUE RAISED AND AS SUCH, ANYONE WHO WAS THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD RESPECT THE POSITION.

HE WAS ALSO SATISFIED AND PROUD THAT OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS SARAWAK WAS THE MOST STABLE STATE AND THE PEOPLE IN THE STATE WERE HONEST.

ON TOURISM WHICH WAS NOW CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE OF REVENUE-EARNER FOR SARAWAK, TAN SRI TAIB SAID THE STATE GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, HAD PLANNED TO BUILD FLATS IN SANTUBONG, ABOUT 30KI FROM HERE, TO ACCOMMODATE GROUPS OF FOREIGN PENSIONERS, ESPECIALLY JAPANESE, TO SPEND SOME OF THEIR RETIREMENT YEARS IN THE STATE. -- BERNAMA  
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