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Bosnia-Mahathir

BOSNIAN BOOK ON DR MAHATHIR TRACES SUCCESS STORY

By: Nurul Isnaini Muslim

KUALA LUMPUR, July 7 (Bernama) -- Distance means nothing when writing on a subject close to one's heart and Bosnia-Herzegovina Ambassador to Malaysia has done exactly that.

Though it is in the Bosnian language, the 180-page book is testimony to the relationship that Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad cultivated with the provinces of the former Yugoslav Federation.

"As a Bosnian, I'm particularly happy to have this book as a kind of my personal contribution to the strengthening of the friendly relations between our countries," said Hajrudin Somun.

He told Bernama that he had always been fascinated by Dr Mahathir, ever since he attended a lecture given by the Prime Minister at Sarajevo University three years ago.

"Since then I've continued following his thoughts, ideas and statesmanship," he said.

Titled "Mahathir: Secret of the Malaysian Miracle," the book analyses Dr Mahathir's 22-years of leadership and his handling of major events and crises during the period including the Asian Economic Crisis and the Bosnian War.

Somun said he also wanted to showcase the development of Malaysia -- from a former British colony to one of the wealthiest nations in Asia -- largely due to the efforts of Dr Mahathir.

"His contributions are particularly in two fields-- in the economic and ideological fields, especially in Islamic issues," he added.

The former journalist used a multitude of sources in the writing of the book, such as news reports, books by Dr Mahathir and testimonies from his family and friends including Tun Daim Zainuddin (former Malaysian Finance Minister).

The book also includes 15 photographs of Dr Mahathir's defining moments and from his personal life.

"I wanted to show the personal aspects of his life as well," Somun said. "Other books don't show (Dr Mahathir's) commitment to family life."

One photograph showed the 77-year-old leader visiting the grave of his father, Mohamad Iskandar.

Somun's book also has a photograph of the historic moment during the 2002 UMNO General Assembly when Dr Mahathir announced his intention to resign.

The 65 year-old veteran diplomat said writing the book was not easy considering his position as an ambassador serving in Malaysia.

"Maybe it is the first time in diplomatic history that an ambassador in one country writes a book about the leader of that country. I'll have to investigate it," he said, smiling.

Somun remains confident he has given Dr Mahathir fair and accurate treatment.

Launched last week in Sarajevo, efforts are currently underway to translate the book into English.

Somun's daughter, Lejla, is doing the translation.

Somun expects the English version of the book to be released to the Malaysian market in September this year, before the Prime Minister leaves office a month later.

-- BERNAMA

NIM AHH AAM

