

TIES ARE BETTER NOW: DR



Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir and Mrs Thatcher at 10, Downing Street on Wednesday evening. — UPIpic.

Bahan asal dari Arkib
Negara Malaysia

Malaysia may review policy towards Britain

LONDON, Fri. — There are now tangible changes in British attitude and policy towards Malaysia to warrant a re-examination of the country's policy towards them, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said here.

The Prime Minister said that on his return to Malaysia, he would consult his Cabinet colleagues "if it was now right for us to re-examine our policies towards Britain."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is here on a private visit, told a Press conference at the Malaysian High Commission here yesterday: "It looks as if the British are keen to renew or to improve their relationship with us."

"In the present circumstances, and after my meeting with Mrs Margaret Thatcher, we naturally ought to have some reciprocal arrangements and action vis-a-vis the change in British attitudes now prevailing."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said

he had been wrongly labelled as an anti-British Prime Minister.

Even though he was not British educated, the fact was that during the Japanese occupation of Malaysia he was very pro-British and anti-Japanese, he said.

"I am not actually anti-British now. I merely disagree with certain of their policies and action, and I think the British themselves understand this."

The Prime Minister said Malaysia had been patient for too long even though these irritants continued.

"We did not embark on our actions in haste and without thinking," he said.

"But when it came to the last straw (the British reaction towards the purchase of Guthrie),

that led us to take action."

Asked if relations with Britain would be on a better footing now, he said: "You can say that. Certainly, things look better now than before."

"I think it would be to their advantage to have good relations with Malaysia."

On his "look east" policy, he said what he meant by it was not clearly understood.

"The policy means that we want to learn from the East. And that will continue. It does not mean that we are going to buy from the East, or that everything is going to be given to Japan."

He said Malaysia would continue to send people to Japan and to receive Japanese help and technology.

The policy did not emerge during his tough stance towards Britain, he added.

"I have been talking about Japan long before this. I have been talking about discipline, about the need to work hard. . . since I was deputy Prime Minister and since I was Education Minister."

Earlier in the day, British Foreign Secretary Francis Pym called on Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir at the High Commission. — Bernama.