

MUNIR MAJID reports

PM on Heng Samrin regime and Khmer talks

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MALAYSIA has not said that Heng Samrin cannot take part in talks on the future of Kampuchea. But, before that matter can be addressed, Vietnamese troops must first be withdrawn from that country.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this to Malaysian journalists last night at the end of his visit to Yugoslavia, Turkey and Romania.

A Wisma Putra official accompanying the Prime Minister's party later explained that the Heng Samrin regime remains a puppet for as long as

Vietnamese troops are in Kampuchea to sustain it.

It is implied that after the Vietnamese troops leave Kampuchea, Heng Samrin would not neces-

sarily be unacceptable for talks on the future of the country. That would be for the Kampuchians to decide.

Reflecting on the major international issues discussed during his trip, the Prime Minister intimated that the country had similar approaches as Malaysia.

On the question of Palestine, Dr Mahathir said that, particularly in Turkey, as a fellow member of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), he emphasised the need

to present the problem as an issue of self-determination — not as an Islamic or Arab matter — which invites a knee-jerk adverse reaction from the West.

Dr Mahathir also disclosed that he had made this point to Mr Habib Chatti, Secretary-General of the OIC; and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) representatives at the Kuala Lumpur Conference On The Question Of Palestine earlier this month.

On most other international issues discussed — such as the restructuring of the world economy, the Afghanistan problem, the Iran-Iraq War and Disarmament — Yugoslavia, Turkey and Romania had the same perspectives as Malaysia.

However, the Prime Minister conceded that on two issues raised by Malaysia — the international dimension of the problem of the oil slick in the Persian Gulf and the future of Antarctica — they did not believe that the issues should be brought out into the open at this juncture, preferring to use diplomatic channels first to make representations.