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Major - Bosnia

MAJOR ASSURES THAT BRITAIN WILL FIND POLITICAL SETTLEMENT FOR BOSNIA

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 21 (Bernama) -- British Prime Minister John Major has assured his Malaysian counterpart Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that Britain will seek a satisfactory political settlement for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Describing the situation in the war-torn country as something that has "touched the hearts of both Malaysians and Britons", Major said during the last twelve months or so, Britain had taken several practical steps to alleviate the problems faced by the Bosnians.

"I think it is fair to say that if we have not taken any action during the last a year or so, perhaps hundreds of thousands of Bosnians alive today would not have been alive if not for the assistance of the British troops," he said, at a dinner hosted by Dr Mahathir at Sri Perdana here tonight.

Dr Mahathir, had earlier in his speech appealed to his British counterpart to reconsider his country's opposition to the launching of air strikes against the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina before the situation deteriorates further.

Major said he was happy to note that Malaysian troops would serve with the United Nations Forces in Bosnia together with the 2,500 British troops.

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Major also responded to the statement by Dr Mahathir on the importance of the early conclusion of the Uruguay Round to enable free trade not only for Malaysia, but also for Britain and other trading nations.

Dr Mahathir had said that Britain, as a leading member of the EC, should try to influence the EC towards a successful and early conclusion of those negotiations before the end of this year.

To this the British Premier said, "We remain in track for a satisfactory outcome to the Uruguay Round by Dec 15 this year."

"The price of success in that round is very great but it has to be recognised by every participant in the Uruguay Round irrespective of from where he comes from that the price of failure in that round would also potentially be very great indeed," he added.

He said it was not in the interest of Britain to see the Uruguay Round a failure.

"I can give you an assurance about the position of the United Kingdom (in the Uruguay Round)," he told Dr Mahathir.-- more

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Major also praised Dr Mahathir for his farsighted vision to turn Malaysia into an industrialised nation by the year 2020.

He said Malaysia has achieved remarkable achievement in all fields and its economy has attained tremendous growth.

Major also said he is happy to note that several Malaysians were studying in Britain. At present, there are about 13,000 Malaysian students studying in the United Kingdom.

On the bilateral relations between both countries, Major said he hoped both he and Dr Mahathir would work hard to maintain the present cordial and strong relations.

"It is a tradition that we have to safeguard for our mutual interest," he added. -- Bernama

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