

Britain asked to reconsider its Time for action,

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position on Bosnia

says PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight appealed to Britain to reconsider its position on Bosnia-Herzegovina before the situation is forever cemented in history as the blackest catastrophe of the modern world.

Speaking at a dinner in honour of visiting British Prime Minister John Major at his official residence, Seri Perdana, the Prime Minister said: "Given the British tradition of upholding respect for the rule of law and principles of international relations, we hope and trust that your leadership in Britain and among the European Community would bring influence to bear in meeting the challenge and putting an end to this holocaust.

"Eloquent speeches, noble declarations and appeals are not enough. There must be political will translated into resolute and credible action.

"Already there have been several threats made against the Serbs, but when they arrogantly ignored the threats, the Europeans backed down. Only action can correct this loss of credibility.

"You are sending the wrong signals to certain countries east of Yugoslavia, countries with a past history of violent acquisition of other peoples' territories," he said.

Major arrived here this evening from Tokyo for a two-day official visit.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia could understand Britain's concern that recourse to large-scale air strikes might jeopardise United Nations humanitarian efforts and escalate fighting in Bosnia.

"Our heart cries out at the

tragedy of an entire race being wiped out in total disregard for even elementary decency.

"But we cannot accept that it is right and just and democratic to sit and watch while such brutish acts are committed."

He said this brutal conflict and crisis in the post-Cold War period exposed the limitations of European political co-operation as well as shamed the vaunted Western advocacy of democracy, justice and human rights.

"I sometimes wonder if I can ever adequately express the extent of Malaysia's an-

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guish and distress at the continued genocide and ethnic-cleansing conducted by the Serbs against Bosnian Muslims.

"One story is worth recounting. It is the story that caused a staff member of the US State Department to resign in protest over the passivity of its policy in Bosnia.

"It is the story of how a six-year-old child was repeatedly raped by Serbs in front of her mother, and she was not allowed to help her child for two days until she died.

"What kind of people are we to accept this kind of behaviour without raising a finger to prevent its recurrence. Yet this is not the sole instance," Dr Mahathir said.

On the bilateral relations, Dr Mahathir said he was pleased that Malaysia and Britain had remained close and cordial.

"Links that were established since the colonial days have over the years,

been nurtured and expanded into a network of interaction between the two countries, encompassing co-operation in education, trade and investment, tourism as well as defence," he said.

Dr Mahathir was happy that two-way trade between Malaysia and Britain had

registered a 10 per cent increase in 1992 despite a prolonged economic recession globally.

"In Malaysia, we still enjoy economic growth and this is achieved not only through pragmatic economic policies and hardwork, but because of free trade and the still largely unre-

stricted access to world markets for our exports," he said.

As Britain is a leading member of the EC, Dr Mahathir said he hoped that the British Prime Minister would influence the EC towards a successful and early conclusion of the Uruguay Round.

Dr Mahathir also said Malaysia hoped that the introduction of new Proton models would help secure a bigger slice of the British car market. Proton is the fastest selling new imported car in Britain.

"We will be producing more new models and new makes, and we hope that the

British market will accept them," he added.

Dr Mahathir invited British companies to avail themselves of the facilities in Malaysia's offshore financial centre in Labuan.

According to Dr Ma-

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Major to have audience with King

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hathir, education had always been a strong component in bilateral relations.

Malaysia was grateful that British institutions of higher learning have been able to accommodate a large number of Malaysian students, presently more than 10,000.

But the progressively higher cost of education in Britain requires new initiatives.

"We look to other ways to continue our educational co-operation without too high a cost for Malaysia," Dr Mahathir said.

(The dinner function was only for coverage by the official media and at Press time Major's speech was not available.)

Earlier, Major was met on arrival at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport by Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Deputy Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzil, who is the Minister-in-Attendance, and British High Commissioner to Malaysia Duncan Slater.

Accompanying Major are his wife Norma, Trade Minister Richard Needham, several top Government officials as well as corporate leaders.

This is Major's first visit here since becoming Prime Minister in 1990, taking over from Lady Margaret Thatcher, who was here earlier this month. Major last visited Malaysia in his capacity as Foreign Secretary

in 1989.

Bername reported that Major is scheduled for talks with Dr Mahathir on bilateral and international issues tomorrow. Their discussions are expected to focus on economic issues, technical co-operation and education.

Tomorrow, Major and his wife will have an audience with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Azlan Shah and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Bainun at Istana Negara.

This will be followed by a visit to the Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional Sdn Bhd plant in Batu Tiga, Shah Alam, and the Connaught Bridge power station in Klang.

A separate programme has been drawn up for Nor-

ma, which includes a visit to the Cadbury production plant in Shah Alam and a luncheon hosted by National Unity and Social Development Minister Datuk Napsiah Omar.

She will also visit the Selangor Cheshire Home.

The British Prime Minister is scheduled to call on Dr Mahathir at his office later in the afternoon.

Both leaders last met in September last year when Dr Mahathir visited London on his way back from an official visit to Ireland.

Major will also receive a courtesy call from Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak at the Carcosa Seri Negara before departing for southern France.