

PM: British Press out to mar

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By Shamsul Akmar

KOTA BARU, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he believed the British media, when creating adverse reports about the country's leaders, intended to undermine these personalities' credibility.

When this was done, these leaders' stand on certain world issues would no longer be respected, the Prime Minister said today.

They wanted other countries to lose their respect for Malaysia by placing it in a

negative light, he said.

They wanted Malaysia to look like a place where corruption occurred all the time and that the leaders were involved, he added.

He said since the British media controlled the international media, their reports would be disseminated worldwide while Malaysia's denials (to the allegations) would not have a similar far-reaching impact.

Dr Mahathir said: "In this sense, they will achieve their objectives to under-

mine our credibility so that our voice will not mean anything because we have been labelled as corrupt people who have no moral obligations at all.

"We cannot ascertain if this is their intention because we cannot read their mind. But one thing is for sure. The false reports concocted by the British media about Malaysia and its leaders will inevitably lead to us losing our credibility on the international front."

Dr Mahathir said this during a dialogue with Federal

officers at the Kota Baru Teacher Training College here this evening.

Also present were Rural Development Minister Datuk Annuar Musa, Deputy Finance Minister Mustapa Mohamed and Federal Development Department director Datuk Mohd Noor Rahim.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia did not bear any ill-feelings towards the British Government, its people or companies.

He said directly or otherwise, the British media had

leaders' credibility

tried to place Malaysia in a bad light by making numerous baseless allegations.

Dr Mahathir said the Government had to act and it chose to stop awarding new contracts to British firms.

He said this action might have affected British firms although the problem was caused by the British media.

"This may seem unfair but we have no other way to retaliate against their actions.

"This action is to register our protest and make them realise that we are unhappy

with their actions," the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was lucky to be able to take such action in the face of unfair reporting by the British media.

He said other developing nations might not be able to take such retaliatory action if they faced problems like Malaysia.

"We can do it because we have managed to develop our country and we do not need to be dependent on their assistance or aid. While it is true that we have

massive trade with Britain, it is not to the extent where they can use the economy to put pressure on us," he said.

Dr Mahathir said on Malaysia's part, there was nothing to fear from its action even though the British could retaliate.

"This is the reason why we have always emphasised on developing our country.

"We have developed our economy so that we cannot be taken for granted or be

PLEASE TURN TO
PAGE 3, COL 1 ✓

PM: We won't be bullied

FROM PAGE ONE

pushed around by any quarter. If they try to push us around, we will also be able to retaliate even if it is a limited retaliation," he said.

Later, replying to a question from the floor during the dialogue, Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia could not rely too much on its military strength to save the country from aggression as there would be nations which were always stronger

militarily.

"Therefore, we use other strategies, especially diplomacy, to handle our international relations.

"Furthermore, at this stage, we do not have to fear military aggression as we are good friends with our close neighbours as well as others.

"But what we should fear is economic strangulation and pressure from the foreign media," he added.