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Bosnia a new, safe place to invest, say co-chairmen

THE Bosnia and Herzegovina Government has given its undertaking that it will provide the necessary facilities and infrastructure to assist Malaysian individuals and companies investing there.

The co-chairmen of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr Haris Silajdzic and Mr Boro Busic, reassured Malaysian investors that the country is now a new, safe place to invest in, unlike a few years ago.

Speaking at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday marking the end of their five-day visit to Malaysia, Silajdzic said it is important to them that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has considered Malaysia's "partnership" with Bosnia-Herzegovina as strategic.

"It's extremely important that Dr Mahathir has said that he will personally see that Malaysian businessmen and capital are engaged in Bosnia and Herzegovina and he considers that partnership a strategic one," Silajdzic said.

He said both he and Busic took the opportunity to ask Dr Mahathir to facilitate an arrangement on the guarantee of Malaysian business activities there.

Dr Mahathir had earlier bade farewell to both Silajdzic and Busic before the press conference.

Silajdzic said Bosnia and Herzegovina has highly-skilled labour force, the technological edge in several areas and could serve as a "bridge" to some parts of Europe.

Meanwhile, Busic said they had invited Dr Mahathir and Malaysian businessmen to visit Bosnia and Herzegovina as soon as possible to check out the opportunities available there.

He said Bosnia and Herzegovina is ready to ease itself into the international business arena following the financial assistance from various concern international monetary organisation such as International Monetary Fund, Paris Club and the European Community.

On the situation in the country, Silajdzic said it would need the presence of foreign military troops even after the 1998 deadline for their withdrawal.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation forces are scheduled to withdrawn from the war-torn country in June next year.

"It would be, in my mind, a mistake to withdraw too early," he said.

He also said the Dayton peace accord could not be negotiated anymore and that it time for its full implementation.

Silajdzic described his visit to Malaysia as marking a new integration era between the two countries especially in terms of economical cooperation.

He also said Malaysia is an ideal model of a developing country.

Busic said he is fascinated with Malaysia's ability to sustain as a multi-cultural developing country, the Multimedia Super Corridor and Vision 2020.

The Malaysia Bosnia-Herzegovina Business Council chairman Abdul Rashid Abdul Ghani said 42 Malaysian businessmen are looking into the possibilities of investing in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The areas are banking, construction, housing and food industries.

"The Bosnian businessmen are also invited to participate in several projects in Malaysia.

"There have been several discussions on the possibility of Bosnian

businessmen participating in the garbage disposal project and construction of pedestrian mall," he added.

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